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„The Road to Academic Title:  
The challenges and criteria for success“  
A qualitative Research about Black African Male Students in Austria

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## Abstract

The current debate about overfilled lecture halls in universities Austria indicates that the demand for tertiary education has exceeded the supply of it. Students who study fast are desired more than ever. In contrast, the dropouts are less desirable. However, Austria is one of the OECD countries that have a high dropout rate.

There have been only a few researches in Austria that looked into how students could succeed and complete their studies. More researches on this topic were directed towards reasons for dropping out of studies. Also, immigrant/foreign students have not been specifically considered in those researches. Black African students are just about 0.18% of the total number of tertiary students in Austria (academic year 2008/9). No research has focused on the situation of this group of students in Austria. This research addressed the task and examined the situation of 12 Black African male students in Austria and the criteria that helped them to be successful in their studies.

The research is qualitative. 12 Black African Male Students (BAMSA<sup>1</sup>) were interviewed and phenomenological analytic method was used to present their responses. It was established that 11 out of the 12 respondents are not foreign (sponsored/complete their studies and go back) students per se. They are better described as immigrant students. In this capacity, they were confronted with Austrian immigration politics. Their “abroad agenda/s”, the foreign academic system and its challenges influenced their academic progress. The respondents mentioned a total of 30 criteria that helped them to be successful in their studies. Included are their previous academic background, self-efficacy, value they place on education, integration and the desire to be a good ambassador of their country, to mention but a few. Ten out of 12 respondents (each) mentioned 2/3 of the factors. In other words, each of the 10 BAMSA possessed about 70% of the factors.

The research was explorative. 20 out of the 30 criteria are conform with literature on this topic; 10 of the criteria are typical for the 12 BAMSA. The responses suggest that there may not be significant differences between the negative experiences of the successful Black African students in Austria and the negative experiences of the dropouts. What the dropouts experienced/encountered and what made them to drop out; the successful Black students in Austria experienced/encountered too but became successful instead. This claim is to be substantiated through a more representative research.

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<sup>1</sup> Black African Male Students in Austria

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**Abstract/Zusammenfassung**

Die gegenwärtige Debatte über überfüllte Hörsäle in Universitäten Österreich zeigt an, dass die Nachfrage nach der tertiären Ausbildung die Versorgung davon überschritten hat. Studenten, die schnell studieren könnten, werden mehr gewünscht als jemals zuvor. Im Gegensatz sind die StudienabbrecherInnen weniger wünschenswert. Jedoch ist Österreich eines der OECD Länder, die eine hohe Studienabbruchsquote haben.

Es gab nur einige Forschungen in Österreich, die darauf ausgerichtet waren, wie Studenten ihre Studien, erfolgreich vollenden können. Es wurde mehr über Gründe des Studienabbruchs geforscht. Außerdem sind ausländische Studenten in jenen Forschungen nicht spezifisch betrachtet worden. Die Zahl schwarzafrikanische Studenten beträgt etwa 0.18 % der Gesamtzahl von tertiären Studenten in Österreich (Studienjahr 2008/9). Keine Forschung hat sich auf die Situation dieser Gruppe von Studenten in Österreich konzentriert. Diese Forschung richtete sich auf diese Gruppe und untersuchte die Situation von 12 schwarzafrikanischen männlichen Studenten in Österreich und den Kriterien, die ihnen halfen, ihre Studien erfolgreich zu beenden.

Die Forschung ist qualitativ. 12 schwarzafrikanische männliche Studenten (BAMSA<sup>2</sup>) wurden interviewt, und es wurde eine phänomenologische-analytische Methode verwendet, um ihre Antworten zu präsentieren. Es wurde festgestellt, dass 11 aus der 12 Respondenten nicht einfach als ausländische Studenten (in Sinne, sponserte Studenten oder die erwartete mögliche Rückkehr nach Studium) zu bezeichnen sind. Sie werden besser als eingewanderte Studenten beschrieben. In dieser Kapazität sind sie mit der österreichischen Einwanderungspolitik konfrontiert. Ihre "auswärts Agenda/s", das österreichischen akademischen System und seine Herausforderungen beeinflusste ihren akademischen Fortschritt. Die Befragten erwähnten insgesamt 30 Kriterien, die ihnen halfen, in ihren Studien erfolgreich zu sein. Mit eingeschlossen ist ihr vorheriger akademischer Hintergrund, Selbstwirkung, ihre subjektive Wertschätzung tertiäre Ausbildung, Integration und der Wunsch, ein guter Vertreter ihres Landes zu sein, um nur einige zu erwähnen. 10 aus 12 Befragten erwähnte (jeder) 2/3 der Faktoren. Das heißt: jeder der 10 BAMSA besaß ungefähr 70 % der Faktoren.

Die Untersuchung war explorativ. 20 aus den 30 Kriterien richten sich nach der Literatur zu diesem Thema; 10 der Kriterien sind für die 12 BAMSA typisch. Die Antworten weisen darauf hin, dass es keine signifikanten Unterschiede zwischen den negativen Erfahrungen der erfolgreichen schwarzafrikanischen Studenten in Österreich und den negativen Erfahrungen der Studienabbrecher geben könnte. Das heißt: Es wurde vermutet, dass was die schwarzafrikanischen Studienabbrecher in Österreich erfahren, die sie zum Studienabbrecher führten; könnten auch die erfolgreichen schwarzafrikanischen Studenten in Österreich erfahren, aber diese wurden stattdessen erfolgreich. Diese Hypothese soll durch eine mehr repräsentative/quantitative Forschung bestätigt werden.

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<sup>2</sup> Black African Male Student in Austria [Schwarzafrikanische männliche Studenten in Österreich]

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## Abbreviations

BAMSA	Black African Male Student/s studying in Austria
IMT	Institute of Management and Technology
GSCE	General School Certificate Examination (ordinary or advanced levels)



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## Chapter 1: Introduction: Overview of the Research

*Well, thanks goodness, at my time there was no such problem with visa or residence permit. As time went on they started demanding that you provide certificate that you are successful in your studies, as time went on they started demanding statement of account to show that you can take care of yourself. At our time, the difficulty was that of sustaining yourself financially. I had to register in one of the German universities as a regular student in order to get a job opportunity there. That is what some of us did. In the holidays we will go there and work and save some money which we will use up until the next holidays. Studying in Austria is actually demanding. One has to sit down and organize himself. With the little language you know, you have to sit down and study (BAMSA-12).*

The above quote indicates that this thesis is about studying in Austria. It examines immigrant students; Black African students in particular. The research about Black African students/graduates attempts to establish what they went through during their studies in Austria and the factors that helped them to be successful in their studies. It is timely and the first of its kind in Austria. Generally in Austria, the graduation rate is low compared to the OECD average.

### 1.1 Low admission of BAMSA and the high rate of dropouts

The road to academic title for Black Africans studying in Austria could be described as accessible but rather difficult. It is accessible because tertiary education is one out of the few things that are not legally forbidden for immigrants of any status in Austria. Of course, for the Africans to study at an Austrian university a completed secondary education is a must.

According to Ebermann (2002), Black Africans gave “study” as the major immigration motive for Africans coming to Austria (Ebermann, 2002:7). The personal claims of Black Africans he interviewed show that 37% of them were in Austria to study. This claim could be understood in two ways. According to Ebermann (2002), to study was the main objective of Black Africans (37%) coming to Austria. Or that the 37% of

Black Africans who came to Austria (even for other immigration reasons) went into studies. Another point to note is that greater numbers of Black African immigrants to Austria are between 15 and 44 years of age (Ebermann, 2002:10). That is to say most of African immigrants come to Austria in their studying/ working age.

Austrian immigration statistics data reveal that for seven years (2003-2009)<sup>3</sup>, an average of 958 Sub-Saharan Africans moved to Austria each year (net immigration)<sup>4</sup>. In the same period of time, an average of 54 students pro year from this part of the world were admitted to study in Austrian universities (both private and public universities) and Polytechnics (Fachhochschulen)<sup>5</sup>. This amounts to approximately 6% of the net immigration of Sub-Saharan Africans to Austria.

Table 1 (below) shows that only about 6% of the Black Africans who come and stay in Austria within one of the examined years move into an institution of higher learning. The huge statistical differences between this table and that of Ebermann (2002) could be emanating from biased sampling.

Ch. 1; Table 1: Net immigration and first Admission of Sub-Saharan Africans

<b>Year</b>	<b>Net immigration</b>	<b>First Admission</b>	<b>%</b>
2003	1.206	21	1,74%
2004	2.410	31	1,29%
2005	1.451	45	3,10%
2006	165	65	39,39%
2007	448	77	17,19%
2008	563	66	11,72%
2009	464	76	16,38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.707</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>6%</b>

Source: Statistics Austria and uni.data; prepared by Patrick Asuke.

<sup>3</sup> The data in Statistics Austria and uni.data which I made use of for this calculation contains data of private universities and that of polytechnics, starting from 2003.

<sup>4</sup> See table 1

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Austria and uni.data.

Ebermann noted the problem of the representative sampling with respect to Black Africans in Austria. His study focused on Black Africans in Vienna (Ebermann, 2002). Another explanation could be the yearly observed downward trends of Black Africans immigrating to Austria; this could be explained by Austrian restrictive immigration policy since 2006 (Ebermann, 2007).

The population structure of Africans in Austria has also changed in the recent past. Ebermann discussing this with respect to situation in Vienna noted that, in the recent years, the major motive of Africans coming to Austria has changed from studying to asylum seeking for the mostly part. He equally maintained that interpretation of the Africans' immigration motives should be handled with care. Africans might provide reasons for seeking asylum in order to have the possibility of staying in Austria to work or for another reason (Eberman, 2002:8). Notwithstanding this, they label their motives asylum seeking, employment seeking, family reunion, etc. The shift away from studying to asylum among the Blacks in Austria calls for attention.

### **Dropouts from Austrian high institutions**

In a period of ten years, about 1568 Black students registered<sup>6</sup> for one study or other in Austrian tertiary institutions. Additionally, 746 students were studying in Austrian public universities in 1999/2000 academic year. This making a total of 2314 Black African students from 2000/01 to 2009/10<sup>7</sup>. **1248 of them dropped out from the student statistics within the same period of time. That amounts to 53.93%. 22.95% (531) graduations were recorded within the surveyed period, and 23.12% are still studying<sup>8</sup>.**

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<sup>6</sup> Erste Zugelassene [First Admission]: Those admitted to study in public universities, polytechnics or private universities in Austria.

<sup>7</sup> I did not get the statistics of Polytechnics (Fachhochschule) for 1999/2000 to 2001/2002. The statistics from the uni.data begins from 2002/2003. There must have been Black students who started their studies or graduated within the unrecorded three years period. Private university statistics in uni.data begins much later 2005/2006. Well, I did not go beyond Statistic Austria and Uni.data since this secondary analysis is just to have an idea of what the statistics say. The statistics I got so far gave me a sufficient impression that Black students in Austria are few in numbers and they drop out in a higher rate than normal.

<sup>8</sup> See Attachment 1 and Attachments 2.

Therefore in the past ten years about 531 graduations were recorded for the Black African students in Austria<sup>9</sup>.

The dropouts are those who at winter semester 2010 are not registered in the uni.data<sup>10</sup> as students. Kolland, (2002) listed four criteria for grading a student as dropout within the OECD countries. Students are defined to have dropped out when:

- (a) At a given date he/she stopped to study and left the university.
- (b) His/her studies was cancelled by school authority for not registering in any course after some years.
- (c) The student left their discipline and went to study something else - changing of the course<sup>11</sup>.
- (d) The student did not participate in any exam for about four semesters (Kolland, 2002:19).

Kolland (2002) identified some students to be fictitious students. These are students who by objective assessment do not study and take exams. On the subjective level they do not perceive university education as a must; studying at the university isn't the centre of their life (p.26). Some Africans among the 53, 93% who dropped out are in this category. They may have for one reason or other (mostly for the fear of deportation or to gain extra time seeking for other chances to get a permanent residence in Austria or just to find something to do and not stay idle) moved into studying.

Austria is one of OECD countries that have a high rate<sup>12</sup> of dropouts. Between 1990 and 1996 the median dropout rate in Austria was 52, 3%. In 1991 the rate was the highest (55, 1%) and in 1996 at the lowest (45, 4%). From 1997 to 2000, an average of 48, 5% dropout rate was recorded in Austrian universities (Kolland, 2002:153). The statisti-

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<sup>9</sup> This does not state the number of graduates. There is the possibility that a person may at the given period of time have two graduations. This suggests the possibility that the number of persons who actually graduated may be lower than 531. I have no statistics to establish exactly the number of persons who had double graduations in different fields or those who had first and second degree e.g. Bachelor degree and Master degree or Master degree and Doctorate.

<sup>10</sup> Austrian tertiary institution data

<sup>11</sup> This case did not apply in this research. My focus was on obtaining an academic title, irrespective of any change in course or institute/faculty.

<sup>12</sup> Drop-out rate is the number of students who started studying but left the university without graduating.



cal estimated 53, 93% dropouts in a period of ten years (2001-2010) for Black African students could be close to the true value.

The graduation rate of Austrian tertiary education increases steadily. According to Schneeberger et al. (2010), between 2004 and 2007, the Austrian graduation rate increased from 20% to 22%. The OECD value for Austria (2007<sup>13</sup> and 2008<sup>14</sup>) is 22-26 for tertiary type A&B. In 2009 there was a big difference in Austrian graduation rate of tertiary type A (29%) and tertiary type B (10%)<sup>15</sup>. The point here is that, the estimated 23% graduations (2001-2010) of the Black Africans lies within the Austrian graduation rate.

## 1.2 Why this study

### Relevance of this research for the sociological research in Austria

According to the cited statistical estimation, out of the few Black Africans who attempted to study, less than 1/4 finished their studies. Kolland (2002) evaluated the situation of the local dropouts in Austrian universities (p.15). There has not been any research known to me which dealt with the situation of black students in Austria as a whole. Moreover, this study will approach the issue from another perspective; different than the reasons for dropping out. What the dropouts experienced and what made them to drop out later, the successful students may have experienced too, maybe even in greater measure, but despite of it, they continued and finished their studies. Hence this work will focus on what made the successful students to succeed. More so, Africans and Black Africans in particular may have encountered other specific situations in Austria than the local students.

I thought it very necessary to carry out a research that may answer the question what sets the Blacks back from studying in Austria. Such researches are common in America, French and UK on the academic terrain, but not a single one (known to me) was carried

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<sup>13</sup> Education at a glance, OECD, 2009, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/25/43636332.pdf> 04.11.2011

<sup>14</sup> Education at a glance, OECD, 2010 <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/free/9610071e.pdf> 04.11.2011

<sup>15</sup> Tertiary type A is 2-3 years academic programme e.g. Bachelor's degree, while tertiary type B is 4-6 years academic programme e.g. Master's degree.

out in German speaking countries. In German speaking countries instead, such research focused on success, learning motivation as well as on the dropout of students generally (Schiefele, et al, 2007; Heublein, et al., 2003; Ziegele, 1997; Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999; Gold, 1999; Hörner, 1999). This research will give rise to many other researches of similar topics and of immigrant students of other nationalities and cultures, and of local students too.

This work will describe variables and factors that may contribute to successful completion of tertiary education. Such synthesized variables/factors, would be useful for further quantitative research analysis.

### **Relevance of this research to Austrian immigration policy**

Black Africans considered in this work come mostly from former English and French colonies. They found themselves in a German speaking country. The education system is to some extent different from the British and French education system. Lastly, most of them came to stay here, unlike ordinary foreign students, who “finish studies and go home”. A look into the situations and circumstances that surround students with this background could open the door for a better integration policy. The foreign student policy in Austria could be modified. Most African students in Austria are exempted from paying school fees in public universities. For such a huge investment, it should be of interest for the government to see more success on the side of the students.

Education is a means through which norms and values of a given society are transmitted. The cultural differences between Africa and Austria are huge. Integration of Blacks in Austrian society has been very difficult. Researches have shown that tolerance and acceptance of other cultures and a good knowledge grow depending on the level of education (Ebermann, 2002). Hence a favourable foreign education policy will ensure success in studies; thereby increasing the rate of integration. Following this idea, education increases individual skills, ability for good and rational decisions; consequently increasing productivity (Kolland, 2002).

Studying abroad has been a major channel for immigration. Austrian immigration policy has been restrictive for long time now. The objective of this work - to focus on the factors that could lead to success in tertiary education of foreigners - could lead to a more positive approach towards foreign students. This research is timely because of the

current debate on students taking entrance exam and paying school fees in Austrian public universities. First generation of Black Africans if not relieved from school fees or if not offered better admission conditions, may be exterminated from Austrian tertiary education for good.

### **Relevance of this research to tertiary education policy in Austria**

The intern management of Austrian institutions of higher education could benefit from a research of this kind. The benefit for students who want to succeed in their studies could be properly conceived if the reasons for not succeeding and failure are identified. This is the rationale behind researches focusing on dropouts from universities (Tinto, 1973, 1993; Gold, 1999; Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999; Kolland, 2002).

Dropping out of tertiary education have economic, psychological and social impact on the students as well as on institutions. The works of Gold, (1988) and Kolland, (2002) point out that, those dropouts cost the university money and deprive potential students of the opportunity to study. It affects the image of the faculty. In their own words, the drop-outs are for the university “failed investment” (Kolland, 2002:13; Gold, 1988).

Davis (2002) claimed that institutions are successful when the students successfully complete their studies (literature review; Chap. 2). This research could reveal some motivational factors, advisory areas and support which foreign or local students need in order to succeed. Some preventive measures could be identified, and those might reduce the rate of dropouts and improve learning. It could lead to structural development, hence boosting efficiency in the studying system. The image and rating of Austrian institutions of higher learning could thereby be improved.

### **Relevance of this research to potential Black students in Austria**

The potential Black students will obviously benefit the most of the research. It will focus on the factors that produce success in studies, especially for Black African students in Austria. The issues which the dropouts experienced or witnessed on their way and then dropped out will be analysed; the successful students could have gone through the same situations on their way but did not drop out. They succeeded. What made them succeed will be brought to light.

This work will generate a catalogue of experiences. It will provide potential Black students with information. Lack of good information and inadequate preparation before entering the realm of tertiary education are some of major causes of dropouts (Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999). If those problems were listed by the respondents, this research could identify them. For those Black Africans who are already discouraged from studying in Austria this might become a useful instrument if they learn how others managed to succeed; it might give them a much needed courage.

### **Goal of the research**

As an exploratory research, it is interesting to find out and describe the criteria that helped Black African students, who succeeded in their studies; at the same time, useful recommendations for further researches could be provided. This research will not focus on students who had mere interest to study. In order to dig out the main criteria for a successful completion of tertiary education by Sub-Sahara African students in Austria, the research targets those Blacks, who may have reached their final years of study and those who completed their studies at the time when this research was conducted. My wish was to collect information from the students about things that motivated them to study and about factors which they think made them succeed in their studies.

### **Research Question**

What criteria/factors could account for a successful tertiary education of Black-Africans in Austria?

## **1.3 Who am I?**

In a research of this nature it is always necessary to present the researcher. I am an undergraduate student who immigrated to Austria. I sought for asylum but my application was turned down. I am a family man with children living in Austria. I am working; doing the kind of job which the Austrian law permits me to do. I work more than 40 hours per week as a regular student, and have some hobbies.

I come from Nigeria, from a lower class family. My parents are not educated. I have no financial back up. In Austria I don't have the chance of obtaining any financial assistance. Before I started to learn German language, I could only speak English language

in addition to my mother tongue. I completed my secondary education at home which qualified me to study in Austria. I started from preliminary studies and I am now writing my project. I am just like many Black students in Austria.

Why do I need to give this background? In this research, I will be saying what I understood. To abide by the ethics of this kind of research - objectivity - I may not be writing my own experience. In fact, at first I thought I knew the answer/s to my research question. *What criteria/factors could account for a successful tertiary education of Black-Africans in Austria?* But when I wanted to write them down; I discovered I can't articulate them. I don't actually know the answers.

To be on the safe side with my interpretations in this work and in order to be more objective, I have chosen the phenomenological method. I decided to "blanket" what I know or what I think that could help black students to succeed in Austria. I asked 12 black male students what helped them to succeed in their studies. Their answers to my questions will be presented (Groenewald, 2004).

My background is of a big advantage in this work. I could understand when the respondents took a deep breath. The bleeding in their heart, I could sense it too. When social desirability comes to play, I know. When a wonderful picture is painted, I could understand. Therefore the accuracy of the interpretations of the responses could be guaranteed.

## **1.4 The scope of this research**

The socio-economic situation of Black-Africans in Austria is well known (Ebermann, 2002). Most of them are first generation immigrants. Black-Africans mainly come to Austria for further education and as asylum seekers. There is also family reunion for immediate families as well as the so called chain immigration. It is obvious that under such conditions they may at first be focused on caring for themselves and their families in Austria or for their families back home. My research becomes therefore more interesting if I focus on those who attempted to study in Austria and their experiences. This group of immigrants, whatever the reasons were that may have brought them here, have the motivation and aspiration to study. Or they may have developed the interest to study here in Austria later.

This research is ideal if it is for all students, irrespective of colour and nationality. It could have as well been a comprehensive study moving from the factors that brings about successful completion of tertiary education to what may be special to a given group of students. It would be beneficial, if wider scope is taken because researchers have done only little on this topic in Austria. Nevertheless, for a project of this kind, with limited space and time, the scope must also be limited.

The research is titled *The road to academic title: the challenges and the criteria for success; a study about first generation Black African males studying in Austria*. It simply implies that the work is limited to: firstly, Black African males<sup>16</sup>. It is about male students with dark skin colour who came from Africa. This group of people are mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, they are to be first generation immigrants/students. They were not born in Austria or in any other western country. The aim is to reduce the work to Blacks who are faced with new culture, new language, Austrian immigration policies and socio-economic circumstances. >>>>>>

Thirdly, it is further narrowed down to such students who have successfully completed a degree study in Austria. Included are students who are already doing their final year as it is believed that last grade students have got some experiences which are valuable for this research. Finally, it is about the challenges/difficulties they encountered during their study in Austria and factors that made them succeed in the final year of their studies. This work will list what the students suffered and the things that made them succeed.

## 1.5 Limitations

Blacks from Sub-Saharan Africa are heterogeneous. The same skin colour doesn't automatically mean the same culture or the same opportunities. Even when they come from the same nation, different regions might have different set of values and interests. Black Africans usually organize themselves within their nuclear groups/milieus (Ebermann, 2007:13ff). Each group is driven by the same engine. Obviously, a better over-

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<sup>16</sup> The decision to focus on male students is due to the limited time for this research. In the pre-test of the questions, no successful Black-African female student was able to give such an extensive interview.

view of factors that made individual students to succeed would be obtained if the national/regional differences were closely scrutinised; however, this research could not look into such differences.

Another aspect that had not been addressed in this work is the quality of learning. There is a general question how to ascertain the overall satisfaction of the student with what he or she studied but the grades and skills acquired during studies are not considered in this work. Institutional differences are also not considered. The respondents were chosen from different institutions and faculties just to see if they enjoyed the same privileges but there wasn't enough information with regards to curriculum, administrative procedures and facilities for the compared institutions.

## **1.6 Definition of terms**

In this work “academic title” begins with first degree. It will concentrate on those who obtained or aspire for a degree, i.e. Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate etc. The students were confronted with challenges such as difficulties in being admitted; tight financial situation; language barrier; mastering school and daily life; distractions e.g. search for work, pressure from studying, and legalising residence permit etc.

On the other hand the “criteria for successful tertiary education” are things which could be referred to in this work as “factors that helped the student to complete his/her tertiary studies”. These are individual qualities – among others patience, motivation, support, determination, strategies employed. Students (in this work) are rated to be successful in tertiary education when (1) they have obtained any degree from Austrian tertiary institution; (2) or when they are at least in their final year.

Africa/n/s, Sub-Saharan/n African, Black African/s or simply Blacks are used in this work to represent the same group of people. Black African male student/s -, Black African males studying - or Black African males who studied in Austria will simply be abbreviated to BAMSA. In tables, description of tables or diagrams “others” or “other African countries” are used to represent Africans other than Blacks. In the same way, tertiary institutions where students could obtain Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or Doctorate degree are the focal point in this work. In Austria, such institutions are universities (both public and private), Polytechnics (Fachhochschulen) and Diplomatic

Academy. I equally used tertiary education, tertiary studies or simply “studies” to denote studying in institutions of higher learning.

## **1.7 Organization of the Research**

I have introduced my thesis, explained reasons for the timely research, and what it could cover. This work proceeds with reviewing previous researches on this topic. It looks into some researches addressing the factors that could help students to succeed in their studies and into researches on the same topic about specific groups. A summary of the factors which are quoted in the literature is presented at the end of Chapter two.

In connection with social exclusion theory, an attempt was made to understand the situation of the Blacks in Austria which constitutes one part of the theoretical section of this work. Bourdieu’s capital theory was employed to explain the resources available for the student that could boost his/her success. Lastly in Chapter three, psychological and theoretical aspects which explain the behavioural features of the student are considered. This perspective was used because of its frequent occurrence in literature on this topic, and emphasis placed on it by the respondents.

Chapter four deals with the method: why qualitative approach was used; processing of data collection and data coding. The general findings are described in Chapter five. In Chapter six the criteria found to have helped the BAMSA are discussed; comparing the criteria with those found in the literature. Finally, this thesis ends with the Chapter seven by summarizing the criteria found and with a presentation of some relational models of the factors. Based on Bourdieu’s capital theory, a complementary relational model among the criteria for success in tertiary studies is proposed in the concluding chapter. The model forms one of the perspectives for further researches. It is a research full of information about how Black Africans could succeed in tertiary education which is so relevant for educational policies in Austria.

## **Summary**

The research is about Black African males who studied in Austrian tertiary institution. In a period of 10 years (2000-2010), only 531 graduations were recorded for Black Africans in Austrian high institutions. There was high rate of dropouts. 54% of the reg-



istered students within the observed period dropped out. The purpose of the research is to look into the situation of Black African students in Austria. The research will be qualitative. The question to answer at the end of this work is: what criteria/factors could account for the successful completion of tertiary studies of Black Africans who study in Austrian tertiary institutions?

The outcome of the research would be relevant for potential students from the African continent. It will be useful for tertiary education policy in Austria and relevant for further researches on this topic. Both the researcher and the researched objects are Black African male students/graduates in Austria. Women are excluded. Heterogeneity of the respondents will not be considered. The thesis is organized in seven chapters. The next chapter will review previous researches done on this topic.

## Chapter 2: Previous researches on succeeding in or dropping out of studies

### Introduction

Two groups of literature sources will be discussed in this chapter. In the first group there are researches that focus on students as a whole group; they do not target minority students. The focal point will be the factors that motivate students to go on and persist in tertiary studies. Two research works will be discussed in this first group – a survey from two south-east universities in USA (509 students) and a survey of 1.503 dropouts as well as 406 graduates of Austrian universities (regular students only).

The second batch of the literature presents three surveys about minority students in the USA. As stated earlier, I did not find such survey about Black Africans or other immigrant/minority students from Austria. These surveys show that specific groups in some societies are historically or by the country's policies disadvantaged. Immigrants and children with immigration background are a good example. The poor, dark skin coloured persons or a specific minority groups are further examples.

In addition to the particular circumstances those students face in general, such minority students could be confronted with other issues too. The three researches of this batch explored in detail the factors that could help minority students to move into university education or lead them to complete their studies successfully. Issues that could hold them back or push them out of studying were equally explored. I will start with researches that focused on students in general.

## 2.1 Researches that focused on students in general

### Development and Validation of the Factors Influencing Pursuit of Higher Education Questionnaire: Harris/Halpin (2002)

In this work, the authors examine a 92-item self-report that could help in a successful completion of college studies. The data was collected from 509 university students of two south-east universities in the USA. The items investigate factors that influence individuals to pursue and complete a higher education. Nine factors were found with reliability estimates for scale scores ranging from .66 to .89. These factors accounted for 43% of the common variance through an exploratory factor analysis. Figure 1 shows the result:

Ch. 2; Figure 1: Measures that could help in successful completion of college studies

*Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients From Results of Study 3*

Scale	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>SD</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>M</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>SD</i> <sup>b</sup>	$\alpha$
Self-Efficacy	9	3.27	0.57	29.42	3.17	.79
Locus of Control	13	3.23	0.52	42.05	4.67	.79
Parental Support	20	3.26	0.44	65.23	9.12	.88
Family Support	11	3.23	0.33	35.55	4.60	.75
Peer Influence	11	3.23	0.58	35.53	4.08	.77
Relative Functionalism	10	3.38	0.42	33.82	4.35	.87
Glass Ceiling Effect	6	1.73	0.22	8.64	2.58	.66
Secondary School Support	11	2.83	0.53	31.10	6.38	.89
Preparation for College	12	3.23	0.32	38.79	2.65	.67
Financial Aid Concerns	9	2.72	0.58	24.48	4.12	.66

*Note.* *N* = 509 for all scales. Statistics are not presented for the open-ended item in the questionnaire.

a. Denotes descriptive statistics for item means.

b. Denotes descriptive statistics for the scale.

Source: Harris/Halpin (2002); Prepared by Asuke Patrick

Here four dimensions are noticeable. (1) Items 1, 2 and 6 could be graded as the psychological resources of the student. (2) Items 3, 4, and 5 could be termed social capital

while 7, 8 and 10 are seen as institutional factors. Item (9) could then be seen as an aspect of the student's cultural capital.

**Study termination (dropout): Between continuity and crisis. Kolland (2002)<sup>17</sup>**

In an elaborate work done by Kolland, (2002), an empirical research on Austrian universities which focused on the circumstances that surround university dropouts, a list of the reasons for dropping out and reasons for persisting to complete university education were given. The dropouts were asked: *what was/were your reason/s that made you to break up university studies*. Attachment 3 (page 139) is the list of reasons for dropping out and their frequency.

In the same research, 78 respondents who completed their study were asked: *Despite the thoughts of dropping out of your study what made you to persist and eventually complete your studies?* The answers were tabulated in Table 2.

Ch. 2; Table 2: Reasons for persisting to complete study

S/N	Reasons for persisting to complete study (more than one answer option)	persons n=78
1	My personal respect	74
2	My friends and colleagues persuaded me that I should not drop out	52
3	I was already so far in my studies that it would have been a pity to drop out.	47
4	I wanted to increase my chances of employment	39
5	I changed my course	29
6	I felt I owe it to my parents and have the responsibility to finish my studies	28
7	I don't know what else I will start doing if I drop out.	24
8	I don't want to look like a failure.	22
9	I found a way of overcoming my learning problems	19
10	I want to increase the chance of my promotion	19
11	I don't want to lose the academic title	16
12	I found a job that agreed with my studying time	10
13	I was encouraged by my professor to continue.	8
14	I removed some responsibilities that have nothing to do with my studies.	7
15	The conditions for studying in the university are better	6
16	I sought for psychological counselling	4

Source: Kolland, (2002); prepared by Patrick Asuke.

<sup>17</sup> Studienabbruch: Zwischen Kontinuität und Krise: Kolland, (2002)

In the above table, a list of factors that could influence a successful completion of graduate studies is provided. The grouping of these items into factors that ensure success in university studies as well as grouping some of the items as hindrances to university education is shown in summary tables 3 and 4 (page 31 and 32 respectively). The four dimensions noted above could equally be deduced. For example, items 1, 3, 8, 14 and 16 spoke of psychological resources while items 2 and 6 are social capital etc.

## **2.2 Researches that focused on specific group of students**

### **Study of Successful Latina/o Students (Zalaquett, 2005)**

In a qualitative research (Zalaquett, 2005), similar results which are typical for ordinary students were obtained about Latina/o Students in the USA. Scholarship and community support were special factors in this minority student group.

Zalaquett (2005) found three barriers affecting their access to higher education and eight supporting factors. The barriers are minimal adult supervision, misinformation and poor information choices. The eight supporting factors are labelled: family, education, and responsibility toward others, sense of accomplishment, friendship, scholarships, community support, and school personnel.

The four dimensions continued to be present but gradually increased in their broadness. Social capital extended to the community which the students came from. Also financing the studies moved from just financial aids to a complete sponsoring of the studies. This characterised the peculiar situation of the Latina/o students.

### **Black Women Beating the Odds from One Generation to the Next: How the Changing Dynamics of Constraint and Opportunity Affect the Process of Educational Resilience (O'Connor, 2002).**

The research of three age cohorts of Black women who were first-generation college graduates in USA, O'Connor (2002) shows that success or failure in academic career pursuit does not only depend on individual's inherent traits, natural abilities, or personal character and temperaments. These individual's qualities work in another complexity of factors such as structures, institutions, policies, social interactions, and their implementation in particular space and time.

Individual qualities have been responsible to produce education resilience<sup>18</sup>. Education resilience was seen by many researchers as a major factor for academic success. O'Connor finds out that

... the changing dynamics of social life must be accounted for in our efforts to improve the theoretical precision with which we understand educational resilience as a socio-historical and institutionally responsive process instead of as an individually determined phenomenon (p. 855).

That is to say: individual qualities alone could not account for why students experience success in school despite educational risk. Rather, individual qualities are only effective in a socio-historical and institutional responsive process.

O'Connor (2002) explains that while being Black and poor significantly increases the probability of limited performance in school, the greater likelihood of a poor school performance is not a function of lower capacity for academic success. Rather, it is a function of structured constraints. The constraints in the US context the author gives as: "inequitable school funding, the privileging of middle-class culture in the norms and expectations of schools, differential teachers' expectations, white skin privilege, and inequitable tracking and counselling practices". These practices he describes as systematic limitations to the chances of the poor Afro-Americans' success in school.

The mentioned systematic structures, institutions, policies, social interaction etc. that formed constraints also require institutionalized and non-institutionalized mechanisms in order to negotiate them. These institutionalized and non-institutionalized opportunities the author describes as: college admissions procedures that follow the policies of affirmative action; the decision on the part of a teacher to provide the information and guidance necessary for negotiating systemic barriers to college admissions.

To be deduced therefore is that race-, class-, gender-, and space-based constraints placed the interviewed Afro-American women at risk for limited educational attainment

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<sup>18</sup> Education resilience is a situation where individuals experience success in school despite the risk. O'Connor defined education risk as statuses that increase the probability of school failure and limited educational attainment as a consequence of the imposition of structured constraints. Resilient individuals according to the author are said to have the ability to beat all such structured constraints. They have dispositions that make them attractive. They are reported to be intelligent and are commonly described as confident, optimistic, and goal directed. For them life has a meaning and they are said to exhibit high expectations and profound self-efficacy (O'Connor, 2002: 856).

while a conscious affirmative action would bring Afro-American women to success in studies.

**Racial Diversity in Higher Education: Ingredients for Success and Failure (Davis, 2002).**

The study done by Davis (2002) revealed the effect of structures, institutions, policies, social interactions etc. on the success or failure of students with immigration background. He advocates for a conscious political action, school management action, and also social action aimed at alleviating the setbacks that minority students experience/d.

Davis (2002) compared 30 universities with high number of Afro-Americans and Latina/o-Americans with 30 universities with lower numbers of non-Caucasian students. The universities with high numbers of the said students he termed successful and those with less students he termed unsuccessful<sup>19</sup>. All the universities apply the policy of affirmative action but the way the affirmative action is carried out makes one group within the 30 successful and the other unsuccessful.

He enumerated structure, practices, competence, and climate as ingredients that accounted for high number of Afro-/Latina/o-Americans in these 30 universities. The absence of such ingredients leads to failure for the unsuccessful universities. In concrete terms the affirmative action included reduction of- or exemption from school fees as well as study programme for people of colour, flexible admission standard, scholarship, institutional college counselling by personnel from such group, good racial and political climate, consultations with the group involved, providing good information system by personnel from such group, integration and awareness programmes for the minority group (Davis, 2002)

O'Connor/Davis (2002) reported more extensively on the institutionalized factors that could influence successful tertiary studies for minority or less privileged students. They extended to both government and faculty policies to bring about the success of minorities in tertiary education. So they equally fall under the four dimensions.

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<sup>19</sup> Davis believes that the increased number of Afro-Americans/Latina/o Americans in the 30 universities indicates that the students themselves are successful. The success of one student could lead to recommending the same university for the next student and thus one university have more of those students than the other. He presented a school fees table showing that the increase in the number of students does not necessarily originate from cheaper cost.

To be noted is that the above researches did not deal with a group of students as being surveyed in this thesis. I attempted to learn what happens to a student of first generation immigrants. The Latino/a Americans and Afro-Americans that were the objects of discussion in the US researches have been born in America. They were not confronted with a new culture or new educational system. Neither were they confronted with immigration policies or a language barrier. Nevertheless, these researches predicted some issues that could be expected from the group of students I intended to examine – first generation of Black African male students, who studied in Austria.

## Summary

In all, the students are confronted with challenges which could lead them to drop out and at the same time they go through experiences that could make them persist and complete their studies. There appear to be issues that every student, local or immigrant, poor or rich, privileged or less privileged might face. In addition to those challenges that all students can experience, there are some other issues that could be specific only for a group of students. Table 3 shows the list of issues that affects students as a whole and the factors that any student irrespective of his/her background may need in order to successfully complete the studies.

Ch. 2; Table 3 Challenges/Criteria that affects students as a whole

S/N	Challenges that apply to all students	Criteria for success that apply to all students
1	Glass ceiling effect	Self-efficacy
2	Poor choice of course	Locus of control
3	Working	Parental influence
4	Family's negative influence	Family's positive influence
5	Peers' negative influence	Peers' positive influence
6	Low performance in study	Perceived function of education
7	Lack of emotional control	Teacher-student interaction
8	Inadequate preparation, lack of information	Good preparation for college
9	Lack of finance	Financial aid
10	Responsibility towards family	Responsibility towards others
11	High expectation of the university	Employment that could go with the studying time
12	Failing examinations	Favourable studying policy



Table 4 gives the list of the issues that affect minority students. Interesting is that the qualities the student may need in order to successfully complete the studies are: external aid; opportunities provided through government policy and the school management. They must conquer the challenges in table 3 and be given the opportunities/criteria in Table 4 in order to be successful in their studies.

Ch. 2; Table 4 Challenges/Criteria that affects minority students

S/N	Challenges that apply only to specific groups (minorities)	Criteria that apply only to specific groups (minorities)
1	Poverty	Affirmative action in the form of: Studying programme for people of colour Flexible admission standard Scholarship Institutional college counselling by personnel from the same racial group Good racial and political climate Consultations with the group involved Providing good information system by personnel from the same racial groups Integration and awareness programmes for such groups
2	Skin colour (being Black)	
3	Discrimination, segregation,	
4	Misguidance, misinformation and discouragement	
5	Racial hostility	
6	Disadvantaged pre-college background	
7		

Source of Tables 3&4: Kolland, (2002): Prepared by Asuke Patrick

The next chapter will look at some theoretical paradigms that could throw light and provide explanations for patterns, behaviours of students and circumstances that are responsible for students' success in -or their dropping out of tertiary studies.

## Chapter 3 Theory

### Introduction

Criteria for success in tertiary education or factors that lead to dropping out of tertiary education are multidimensional. It could therefore be approached by numerous theories. One could talk about sociological, organizational, economical and psychological theories (Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999:218ff). I will be employing sociological capital theory (Max and Bourdieu) as well as Agency to explain the pattern I found in the factors that lead the BAMSA to success in tertiary studies.

As the focus of this research is on Black African male students, social exclusion theory could be brought in to illuminate the reasons for more complex patterns that may be observed among Black male students. BAMSA are not just foreign students but most of them are immigrant students. The motive for immigration together with the immigration laws and conditions in the country of destination, in this case Austria, influence the students' success in studies. I will start with Bourdieu's capital theoretical paradigm.

### 3.1 Bourdieu's Capital theoretical perspective

The factors that influence or contribute to a successful completion of tertiary studies are depicted in Max and Perrier Bourdieu's capital theoretical paradigm. Max's capital theory centres on possession of economic capital – the means. Max saw that possession of the means of production confers social advantage to the capitalist. Generally it could be said that students who have the economic means would complete their studies successfully. Some authors have attempted to explain either success or dropping out of tertiary education as based on the economic theory (Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999: 219). Financial support or lack of it was hardly mentioned by respondents in all researches on succeeding or dropping out of studies respectively.

However, finance or theoretical explanation in economical terms is just one aspect of large numbers of reasons or theoretical explanations on this subject. Bourdieu saw other "means" or forms of capital other than economic that could be of social advantage to

those who possessed them. He postulated social capital and cultural capital; both could under certain conditions be transformed into economic capital (Giddens, 2009).

Bourdieu's cultural capital is a form of capital gained from family, through education; leading to a study certificate (Ansalone, 2009:67ff). Bourdieu defined cultural capital as "the formal educational credentials that an individual possesses and the more intangible complex of values and knowledge of cultural forms in his or her demeanour" (Portes, 2000:2). Researchers have attributed success in studies to the socio-economic status of parents. That is, students from upper class family have higher probability to complete their studies successfully (Dell'mour/Landler, 2002:37; Montt, 2011:50). The influence of their family background in the form of academic culture and support serves as a motivation to the student.

Bourdieu saw that cultural capital could be manifested in three ways which are in consistence with factors that influence succeeding or dropping out of tertiary studies. Cultural capital exists in an embodied state (Giddens, 2009:846). People possess it and carry it with them in the form of speech, ways of thinking and body movements. In the case of a tertiary student, there have been academic potentials acquired from previous learning and socialization. Such potentials affect the student's ways of thinking; how he comports himself in the studying processes could play a big role in the successful completion of studies.

Cultural capital also exists in an objective state in the form of arts, books or clothes (Giddens, 2009). For student of tertiary institution, the cultural capital can take the form of books, school materials and external sources of information. Finally, Bourdieu saw cultural capital in an institutionalized form. This could be a credential or educational qualifications. Researchers agree in their findings that succeeding in or dropping out of studies is influenced by the pre-college academic performance; e.g. secondary education.

Some of the factors that contribute to a student's success in studies take the pattern of Bourdieu's social capital theory. Social capital refers to the connections/networks which enable people to accomplish their goals and extend their influence (Ansalone, 2009:68ff; Giddens, 2009:846). People form groups and memberships and involve themselves in elite social network or move within social groups which are well connected. Researchers have found out that student's interaction among themselves, a good

teacher-student relationship and good social integration in an institute of higher learning are factors that increase student's chances to succeed in studies (Tinto, 1975).

Schröder-Gronostay et al., (1999) simply made the reference to the theoretical explanations of drop-outs proposed by Spady (1970) and Tinto (1975). Spady saw lack of successful completion of study as a failed integration of such student in an institute of higher learning. Tinto (1975) divided the idea of integration into two. He proposed academic integration and social integration of student within the institution. Academic integration he saw as the skills and ability to perform well in academic works, e.g. pass exams and write assignments. Social integration on the other hand is the readiness to associate and relate to other students and institute's personnel (Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975 cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999:218).

Bourdieu's symbolic capital could be seen among the students. Symbolic capital is prestige and honour (Giddens, 2009:846). Such prestige and honour could be emanating from the acquired cultural capital or people the person associates with. In a student's case, the display of skills and know how in the school or being friends of such persons gives the student prestige and honour which in turn could lead him/her to good/intelligent colleagues. It has been observed that just mere social integration or relating with fellow students may even be detrimental. It all depends on the kind of group the student finds himself in. Tinto (1975) saw excessive social interaction leading to low academic integration. But he observed that it is a function of the types of persons with whom the interaction occurs (p. 108).

One of my respondents spoke of a strategy to select the kind of students that could be supportive and helpful to him.

Yes I applied a strategy. There was really a formula. The formula I used was that at the initial stage, if you register for a course, you have to be there punctual and you have to show that you are good. This will enable you to move on with good heads in the class. You know there are best heads. That is people that get 1s; the Austrians. This enables you to come into their midst. If you don't know anything you will not get such friends. You will always get sympathizers. I didn't want sympathizers. I avoided moving with foreigners. I want people that I will learn something from not people that don't know much, like me. We move together, we go to get coffee together. [...] From that time I started being good. I started getting 1s like them. At initial time, it was not like that. But when I started using this strategy - socializing with the best heads, some of them even invited me to their home. I meet with their par-

ents. Our friendship went to more than university. The strategy is if you are good you get the best heads and move with them; not with the dumb-heads (BAMSA-1)

Another paradigm in Bourdieu's capital theory which is found to be a pattern in the factors that lead to success in studies is the idea that one form of capital could be traded for the other. That is, cultural capital could be exchanged with economic capital. This paradigm is seen in a careful grouping of the factors I found to be influencing success in studies presented in this thesis. The factors could be grouped in personal factors and external factors. It works like that: a person having more of personal factors may require less of the external factors in order to be successful in studies and vice versa (Chapter 7 - Conclusion). This pattern is consistent with Bourdieu's capital relation paradigm. The theory is recommended to be confirmed.

Bourdieu brought the idea of "field". Giddens defined field as "various social sites or arenas within which are the competitive struggles rooted in the form of capital take place" (Giddens, 2009:846). Social life is arranged in "fields". Relationship operates there and "each field has its own rule of the game" (ibidem). Institutional influences are never left behind when discussing the factors that contribute to or hinder success in tertiary education (Kolland, 2002:11). Organizational problems, curriculum and institution's expectations etc. contribute to the number of dropouts from an institution of higher learning (Kolland, 2002:11ff). On the other hand, affirmative actions, good information system, student counselling etc. boost student performance and lead to successful completion of studies (Davis, 2002:147).

Finally, Bourdieu brought the idea of habitus. Habitus can be defined as "the learned dispositions such as bodily comportment, ways of speaking or *ways of thinking and acting which are adopted by people in relation to social condition in which they exist and move through*" (Giddens, 2009:847; emphasis added). Habitus shows the link between social structure and individual actions and personality. In attempt to explain succeeding or dropping out of tertiary studies, the ability to negotiate with existing and emerging circumstances, the skill of the student to act, his/her behaviour, attitude, will-power, values, choices, etc. have been in the centre of interest.

Some authors saw the above listed abilities and personal qualities (Agency) as psychological theoretical dimension of why people succeed or drop out of tertiary studies. Agency will be discussed in a moment. Now, as a short digress, the social situation of

BAMSA should be looked into. It illuminates what O'Connor (2002) termed "complexity of factors" such as structures, institutions, policies, social interactions, and their expression in a particular space and time (literature review, chap. 2).

### **3.2 Social exclusion – a useful digress to understand the BAMSA**

Littlewood et al., (2000) identified that people can be excluded politically and economically. Social exclusion is associated greatly with poverty analysis. Social exclusion could emerge from changing patterns of employment and unemployment, modifications to the welfare-states' provisions, changing pattern in demographic mobility and changing definitions of eligibility of some civil rights and duties (p. 2). Blacks coming to Austria will be, no doubt, confronted with new employment practices, eligibility questions etc.

Littlewood et al. (2000) saw six forces that drive social exclusion. Two of them are of relevance for this research. Social exclusion is driven by (1) "growth in the demand for and supply of an ever greater number and diversity of educational and vocational qualifications; (2) growth in the flow of population movement across national boundaries and indications of a rise in resistance to such movements among sections of indigenous populations" (p.3). Researches about Black Africans in Austria show how they keep negotiating with these forces when they arrive in Austria. Most of them end up in a lower social position due to poor qualifications or due to Austrian immigration/integration policies. These could have serious consequences for BAMSAs' decision, either to continue or break up their studies.

Another feature of social exclusion is that it arises from interplay of class, status and political power. It serves the interest of the included. In turn, the excluded seek to gain access through claims of citizenship and equal right (Littlewood et al. 2000:6). The feeling of being included is associated with skin colour, faith and citizenship (Hochschild et al., 2011:79). This suggests why most Black Africans may be attempting to legalize/gain permanent residence or gain citizenship when they arrive in Austria. This equally influences the decision to study and the effort/time invested in studies.

An extreme effect of social exclusion is the failure of the excluded to be taken into acceptance by the dominant culture. The notion was included in the Perrier Bourdieu

and Passerson's work: Foundations of a theory of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977/1990). In their work, there are cases of pupils who failed to be accepted or become incorporated into the dominant cultural forms as presented through formal education. Littlewood et al., (2000) maintained that the feeling that one is indefinitely excluded leads to quitting the pursuit of higher goals (p.14). This and the likely effects, e.g. violence, crime, psychological effects, etc. (Lerch, 2011) are just but a few implications of social exclusion that could influence BAMSA's decision to drop out of study or persist in studies.

### **Social situation of Blacks in Austria - Blacks, the uninvited guests**

The problems of Blacks in Austria are as numerous as their numbers. They range from cultural shock to systematic closing of doors against them through political apparatus. Parts of this large range are prejudice, discrimination and scepticism against them. Majority of Africans are not invited, not welcomed and not permitted to stay in Austria. These problems contradict their positive expectations prior to their arrival in Austria and might result in brain fog, loss of perspective, resignation, depression and negative feelings that can be acted out in the form of aggression, petty crimes etc.

According to Hochschild and Lang (2011), Austrians are among the nations in which residents are "deeply patriotic and deeply concerned about bringing outsiders in" (Hochschild, et al. 2011:89). Foreigners are only considered economically helpful because they do the kind of jobs which Austrians reject. Otherwise, they are considered as a threat to employment for Austrians. They are a burden to the welfare system. Their presence causes problem of housing (Ndahayo, 2002:63). Acknowledged in literature are the restrictive immigration policies, resident policies and employment policies (Ebermann, 2002: 129-133). An African could only be given the chance to enter Austria as a diplomat, visitor, student or due to family reunion. The possibility of Blacks coming with a long term visa as a special/key/ordinary manpower to Austria is almost impossible (Ebermann, 2007: 9ff; Sauer, 2007:209).

The employment permit is dependent upon the resident permit (Ebermann, 2007:133ff). Even today, despite the current attempts of easing the employment policy in order to enable highly qualified foreign manpower to work in Austria, it is still inevitably linked to the residents permit policy (Niederlassungsgesetz /Fremdpolizeigesetz, 2005). Most Blacks, based on the nature and date of their coming to Austria, do not

make any acquaintance with the 2005 resident permit policy; hence such persons could not benefit from the new employment policy. Favoured are those whose spouse is legally living in Austria, or adoptive children. Included are students who studied successfully in Austrian university in a demanded field (AuslBG, 2011)<sup>20</sup>.

Many Blacks who could not benefit from the actual resident policy found themselves as asylum seekers. With exception of those from war and international recognized hunger zones or those whose asylum cases are “*glaubwürdig*” [trustworthy], all others are often rejected. Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana and Sierra Leone are the most frequent Sub-Saharan African countries in Austria’s asylum statistics<sup>21</sup>. Since 2006 there was more restrictive immigration policy and asylum laws in Austria. Consequently there was a steep reduction in numbers of asylum application as well as a high rate of rejections (Schaup, 2010: 57).

Despite the poor conditions, in the years 2008/2009/2010, considerable numbers (total: Nigeria - 535/837/573; Somalia - 411/344/190; Ghana - 27/28/16 and Sierra Leone: 10/26/17 respectively) of Blacks Africans sought for asylum in Austria. Sauer, (2007) noted that the stricter asylum laws did not necessarily reduce immigration but increased irregularities (p. 203).

Blacks mostly struggle against the status of illegality for many years (Ebermann, 2007:136), irrespective of how they came to Austria, be it a visitor, student etc., whether they have plans to stay or to return home or re-immigrate, most Blacks spend three to ten years in Austria before moving (Ebermann, 2007:8). They spend most of these years trying to legalize their documents, have further education, at the same time accepting all kinds of jobs in order to survive. Those who could not find a job or who are impatient, land in criminal acts, tarnishing their image and the image of other innocent immigrants.

Reiterer, (2003) wrote that even when people come from the same geographical location, all rights inclusive, minorities among them exist. Minority as he defined, are those

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<sup>20</sup> BUNDESGESETZBLATT FÜR DIE REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH: 25. Bundesgesetz: Änderung des Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetzes und des Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetzes 1977 :[http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA\\_2011\\_I\\_25/BGBLA\\_2011\\_I\\_25.pdf](http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2011_I_25/BGBLA_2011_I_25.pdf) 13.07.2011

<sup>21</sup> Asylanträge 2000-2010 nach Staatsangehörigkeit:

[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/asyl/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/wanderungen/asyl/index.html) 13.07.2011



groups of persons in a society with minor power and to some extent less right (p.135). Such groups have a common experience of being rated low in a society. Reiterer (2003) maintained that race is one medium for rating people in Austrian society. Race is solely associated with skin colour. Hence the black skin colour is stigmatized with negative characteristics given by the white counterparts (p.143). In Austria, the Black Africans are not only minority; they move about with bad images attached to them by some of them, and stereotypes given to them by the white majority.

#### **“Der Schwarze/Die Schwarze“ - Racism or reality?**

The social discourses pertaining Blacks in Austrian society range from poverty to a vague cultured group of people (Ebermann, 2007; Sauer, 1996, 2007). The genesis of devaluing the Blacks by their white counterparts can only be left to speculation. It finds itself mostly in the colonial and post-colonial discourses. In this discourse, Spivak proposed (1984) a social psychological mechanism known as “othering”. A socio-psychological process in which people or a person is constructed as the “other”. A person is classified and made visible while the classifier’s position is untouched (Spivak, 1984 cited in Lerch, 2011:47). This classification takes place when two persons (in this case Blacks and Whites) come in contact. It takes place in the act of describing each other in the form of “my impression about him/her”.

There have been researches to demonstrate how Austrians see the Blacks and vice versa (Ebermann, 2002; 2007; Kravagna, 2005; Ndahayo, 2002; Sauer, 1996, 2007; Skina, 2005; etc.). Schaup (2010) researched on how Blacks see Austria. She came to a conclusion that with the exception of immigration policy, Africans speak positive about the institutional features in Austria. They appreciate the good living conditions, little poverty, good law and order and freedom of speech (p.101). In the same research, the Blacks criticized the lack of social cohesion, discriminatory treatment, marginalization of the Blacks in terms of political participation and the difficulty they have with regards to a potential employment in Austria, based on their work qualification.

Blacks tend to describe their experience in life more positively. Sauer, (1996) shows how the principle of “the bad is better than the worst” is part of Black man’s life (p.45). Or the idea that the Blacks say ‘the bottle is half full, but to the Whites such bottle is half empty’. Blacks try to see the positive thing embedded in a bad situation. In this case they try to seek the positive thing even in the bad Whites; while the Whites look

for every negative thing that is in good Blacks. This is an explanation to Wachendorfer's claim that Whites don't experience discrimination because of their whiteness. Whites only become white when they come in contact with Blacks (Wachendorfer, 1999 cited in Lerch, 2011:47). And an explanation to why there is overrating of Whites among the Blacks and the reverse is the case among the Whites (Ebermann, 2007:82).

In Ebermann, (2002), Africans appreciate Austria in the areas like old culture, history, positive characteristics such as humour, hardworking, good organization, development and wealth. However Austrians are not good to foreigners, they hate Africans, and they refuse contact with other cultures. They are cold to other people, egoistic and self-centred. They are afraid of other people, hectic and complicated (p. 50ff).

In the eyes of Austrians, according to Ebermann, Africans range from being lovely to being devilish (Ebermann, 2007; Sauer, 1996). Africans are lovely people; they are "super", nice, friendly, relaxed and easy. However there are Austrians who have an extremely negative opinion about Africans. Some spoke in clear text: "I hate this group of people"; "They are to be thrown out from here". Some call them all N-words they can think of. Others associate Africans with criminal acts, suspects, lazy, pestering. There are those who associate Africans with hunger, war, AIDS, and sickness. They are victims of discrimination, slavery, colonialism, servants of the first world. Africans are underdeveloped, traditional and backward (Ebermann, 2007:55ff).

Asking Austrians for the reasons why they hold reservations against Africans, Sauer (1996) found the following: Africans are Black (dark skin colour); they are poor; they have different culture and different way of thinking. But they value togetherness and solidarity. They are positive thinkers (p. 43ff).

In Austria, there is both the old and new form of racism. The old form is the alleged biological inferiority of Blacks, symbolic racism or racial resentment. Kinder/Sanders (1996) defined racial resentment as "the conjunction of the Whites' feeling towards Blacks and their support of American values, especially secularized versions of the protestant ethics" (p.293).

The new form of racism anchored itself in the western moral traditionalism. They are more refined and less offensive. Blacks, they say, lack the moral values, and the values of individualism, hard work, discipline and self-sacrifice. Blacks do not try hard enough

to overcome difficulties they face. They take what they have not earned. They are violent, not intelligent and not trustworthy (Kinder and Sander, 1996: 106). In this way, racial anger and indignation are now joined to cherished cultural values. They are “now widespread and expressed by the Whites without hesitation” (Hochschild et al, 2011: 100ff).

The reality is that the attacks on the Blacks have taken another shape. Before, it was based on fallacy – differences in intelligence (Wolf, 1997; Finzsch, 1999). The old racism could not be scientifically proved. The Blacks are equally seen as intelligent (Jensen, 1997).

The truth is that there is no documented biological superiority of any race however defined. There are some superficial traits like skin colour and body built. They are striking and we notice them. That is what misleads us. It makes us think that races are very different. They are not, when we look under the skin” (Finzsch, 1999: 87 cited in Totter, 2009:44).

Whites hold their reservations these days against the Blacks because Blacks are not yet perfect in White man’s culture (Hochschild et al, 2011). But are all the Whites punctual? Are they all hard working? They have no criminal records? There is truth in their reservations against the Blacks, but are many of them not guilty of the same offenses? Lerch, (2011) speaking about Austria said „Racism permeates every aspect of our social life. Racism and discrimination is for many persons a daily experience in Austrian society”<sup>22</sup> (Lerch, 2011:45).

### **The effect of racism and segregation on Blacks’ academic chances**

The political and social discourses about Blacks are stress factors. They are threats to academic success. Lerch (2011) gave a detailed account of the impacts of racism, discrimination, marginalization and stereotype on the social and psychological health of the minority group. Her report was based on several researches. In the work of Astride Vielho (2010), discrimination and attacks against the minority have effect on their physical and psychological health (Velho, 2010:16ff). The process of internalizing and combating discrimination is a stress factor and could affect behaviour and self-value of a

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<sup>22</sup> „Rassismus durchdringt alle Lebensbereiche unserer Gesellschaft. Rassistische Diskriminierungen sind in Leben vieler Menschen alltägliche und erschütternde Erfahrungen“.

person. It hinders success in education, family relationships and socialization, and affects identity (Kirkcaldy et al., 2006).

Discrimination, marginalization and experience of racism lead to economic and social disadvantage. They affect education and employment; thereby retard social mobility (Igel et al., 2010; McKenzie, 2006). Graham and Robinson (2004) researched about Black British students. They found out that structural racism in the education system leads to less success of the Blacks in education (Graham/Robinson, 2004)

Socio-economic factors, race, institutionalized factors, that is the learning environments, opportunities, as well as personal qualities were the major determinants of success or failure in tertiary education of migrant population (Harris/Halpin 2002; Zalaquett 2005; O'Connor 2002; Davis, 2002). With exception of privileged students, those who may have been sponsored by rich parents, by the government of the country of origin or companies, an average Black student coming to Austria to study may find him/herself in a low socioeconomic status. Such situation could be significant to explain the reasons for Africans studying, not studying, or dropping out from tertiary institution.

Ebermann (2002) revealed in his studies how most Black-Africans in Vienna see themselves as victims of both political and social settings (p. 23). Such social exclusion that produces self-exclusion could form a hurdle for Sub-Saharan students. Ebermann equally noted that only the Sub-Saharans in Vienna who do not see themselves as victims (consequently, freeing themselves from the danger of self-exclusion) succeed in Vienna (ibidem). Such persons presented themselves as positive thinkers and took responsibility of their situations (ibidem). Otherwise, they end up as under-achievers.

In an experimental study: Social Exclusion Impairs Self-Regulation; Baumeister, et al., (2005) showed that being excluded or rejected causes decrements in self-regulation. The excluded quit sooner on a frustrating task. *Exclusion led to impairment of attention regulation as measured with a dichotic listening task.* They as well pointed out that rejected people are capable of self-regulation but are usually disinclined to make the effort. In an earlier experiment, *Effects of social exclusion on cognitive processes: Anticipated aloneness reduces intelligent thought* (2002), the same author revealed that significant and large decrements of intelligent thoughts (including IQ and Graduate Record Examination Test Performance) were found among people who are excluded. "The decline in cognitive performance was found in complex cognitive tasks such as effortful

logic and reasoning; simple information processing remained intact despite the social exclusion”.

**Education increases integration and guarantees social mobility**

Discussing the social and political differences between Whites and Blacks in Austria will find no end. Hence it is more profitable to engage in discussions that improve the situation. The Blacks in this society need to be educated in the culture, norms and values of the society. Education gives the Whites a better understanding about foreign culture. Increase in education leads to decrease in hatred and rejection of immigrants (Ebermann, 2002: 34). Increase in education decreases prejudice and racism. The explanation points to the fact that the uneducated in the society are more likely to be not satisfied with their life, pessimistic about the future and being jobless which leads to hatred of immigrant population (ibidem).

The level of Black person's education also affects his/her perception of Austrian society. Black upper class sees Austrians more ready to help than the lower class (Ebermann, 2002: 77). In a likely research, Schaup (2010) stated that Africans who had tertiary education from Africa see Austrians as being ready to help. While those who had only primary education see Austria less ready to help (p. 88). Ebermann (2007) explained that the Blacks who had tertiary education from home are better informed about western behaviour. They are more likely to possess the resources that equate them to Austrian society (p. 80).

The importance of education in the modern society cannot be over emphasized. Kolland, (2002) summarises the effect of education in a modern society as follows: Educational certificate allots status to the educated and ensures generational mobility. It is a door to enlightenment. Every employment since the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century is connected with educational qualification. Socioeconomic status is linked up with education. The social status a person is born into isn't a determining factor anymore. Human capital theory states that success in economic and social life of a person is slightly determined by some personal characters which are received through education (Kolland, 2002: 1ff).

**Blacks' home education qualifications - accreditation problem**

Educational qualification of the Blacks in their home country receives less or no accreditation in Austria. A good number of Blacks coming to Austria are graduates of a university or polytechnic college. According to Ebermann, 74% of the Africans living

in Vienna had their secondary school certificate; 34% are graduates from their country. This claim was also confirmed in another research. In Schaup (2010), 60% of the Blacks respondents had tertiary education. Both studies concluded that Blacks academic rate is equivalent to Austrian academic rate (Ebermann, 2002:9; Schaup, 2010:55). However Blacks could not make use of their certificates here. They hardly or not at all receive accreditation.

In the discourse about accreditation, one must add that, this is not peculiar to the Blacks. As per 2008, there were about 745 300 persons in the age between 15 – 74 years living in Austria with foreign certificates. Only 15% received accreditation, whereby greater numbers of them are from the EU states. 82% of them did not even apply for accreditation while 3% are still waiting for answer. 326 000 of those who did not apply for the accreditation said “there is no need to apply” because they came from countries whose certificates require no accreditation in Austria<sup>23</sup>. There is the rigorous road of supplementary exam; otherwise you must go through Austrian university education. Most often, this is the option left for Africans.

The presence of the Blacks in this society dates back to 18<sup>th</sup> century and the end of their presence is not all that visible. The best documented of 18<sup>th</sup> century Blacks in Austrian society is Soliman Angelo (Höpp, 1996:69ff). He was regarded in Vienna society as “*hochgeschätzt*” - a personality, rich, intelligent and a master of German language. The first Black graduate in Europe was Fredric Pedersen (Fredric Svane). He began his theology studies 1732 in the University of Copenhagen and graduated 1734 (Höpp, 1996:34). In 1896, 70 Ashanti lived in Pratersterngarten (Ebermann, 2002:58). Today more than 20,000 Blacks live in Austria<sup>24</sup>. Blacks could do better these days if they are welcomed, not being confronted with racism, stereotype, discrimination and psychological insolence.

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<sup>23</sup> Arbeits- und Lebenssituation von Migrantinnen und Migranten in Österreich 2008 - Modul der Arbeitskräfteerhebung 2008:

[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/publdetail?id=2&listid=2&detail=534](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/publdetail?id=2&listid=2&detail=534)  
16.07.11

<sup>24</sup> Population of foreign origin by citizenship resp. country of birth (2010-01-01):

[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/publikationen?id=2&webcat=2&nodeId=63&frag=3&listid=2](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bevoelkerung/publikationen?id=2&webcat=2&nodeId=63&frag=3&listid=2) 16.07.11 see Attachment 4

### 3.3 Agency

Agency has been associated with selfhood, motivation, wills' purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity (Emirbayer/Mische, 1998:962). Albert Bandura stated that human agency includes the temporal extension of intentionality and forethought, self-regulation by self-reactive influence and self-reflectiveness about one's capabilities, quality of functioning, and the meaning and purpose of one's life pursuits (Bandura, A. 2001:1).

"Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and distributed structures and functions through which personal influence is exercised, rather than residing as a discrete entity in a particular place. The core features of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times. To be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's actions" (ibidem).

Outlining the core features of human agency, first on the list according to Bandura is intentionality. This refers to acts done intentionally. "An intention is a representation of a future course of action to be performed. It is not simply an expectation or prediction of future actions but a proactive commitment to bringing them about" (Bandura, 2001:6). Another feature of agency is forethought. Bandura's argues that, people set goals for themselves and select and create courses of action likely to produce desired outcomes and avoid detrimental ones (p. 7).

The third feature is self-reactiveness. Bandura defined this as self-directed attitude which operates through self-regulatory processes that link thought to action. "These include self-monitoring, performance self-guidance via personal standards, and corrective self-reactions (p.8). The last but not the least feature is the idea of self-reflectiveness. "Through reflective self-consciousness, people evaluate their motivation, values and the meaning of their life pursuits" (Bandura, 2001:10). In this state of mind people chose to act in favour of one thought over another. Agency is thus "understood primarily as a pool of enabling resources, from which the actors draw in order to achieve their own goals" (Adam, 2009:975)

Furthering his Agency theory, Bandura (1997) proposed a social cognitive model known as self-efficacy to show "individuals' confidence in their ability to organize and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task" (cited in Eccles et al., 2002: 110). Bandura's self-efficacy theory focuses on expectancies for suc-



cess. He believes that “individuals’ efficacy expectations are the major determinant of goal setting, activity choice, willingness to expend effort, and persistence (ibidem).

Locus of control theories (Crandall et al., 1965; Rotter, 1966), self-determination theory (Deci/Ryan 1985), interest theories (Alexander et al. 1994, Schiefele, 1999), goal theories (Ames, 1992; Anderman et al., 2001) are just but a few of Agency that could be employed to understand why some students finish their studies while others drop out.

However, O’Connor (2002)<sup>25</sup> shows that success or failure in academic pursuit does not only depend on individual’s inherent traits, natural abilities, or personal character and temperaments. These individual’s qualities work in another complexity of factors such as structures, institutions, policies, social interactions, and their expression in a particular space and time. Not forgetting that socio-economic background of the student plays a big role on whether the student will complete his/her studies or not (Montt, 2011: 50). The Black Africans coming to Austria to study could be facing more complex factors. To be included there are their migration motives and agendas. The sociological perspective of agency theory could be of great relevance in understanding how the personal traits negotiate in a given space and time to bring about student’s success in studies.

Reconceptualising human agency, Emirbayer/Mische (1998) saw Agency as

“(A) temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)” (p 963).

Any Black African first generation immigrant in Austria is confronted with a new social setting, new culture and economic needs. If one is interested to study, s/he faces a new academic structure and processes. Such students informed about their socio-economic background, academic background and having a future target with many possibilities and faced with the contingencies of the new environment must possess some potential to act, in order to succeed as students.

The theoretical conception above suggests that the listed psychological resources of the individual are triggered in to action by the social factors. With regards to BAMSA, I

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<sup>25</sup> See literature review.

discussed extensively earlier on about the contingences of their new environment. The BAMSA would persist in studying while depending on his/her individual's socio-economic background, academic background and his/her future target. Discussing the psychological components that ensure success in studies, Ethington (1990) proposed that, the expectation to succeed in studies and the subjective value of tertiary education certificate which the student has, influence his/her performance and persistence in studies (Ethington, 1990 cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al, 1999:219).

The psychological aspect of the student, in this context, the expectation to succeed in studies is seen by Ethington (1990) as directly influenced by the student's self-estimation of his/her academic competence. It entails the student's conviction and belief of his/her academic ability. The value attached to tertiary education certificate according to Ethington (1990) is to a great extent influenced by the individual, the economic and social goals and the career perspective of the student (*ibidem*).

“Agency reveals itself in varying degrees of manoeuvrability, inventiveness, and reflective choice shown by social actors in relation to the constraining and enabling contexts of action” (Emirbayer/Mische, 1998:964). The BAMSA having made up his mind to study is ready to manoeuvre, invent, and make good reflective choices within the discussed constraints and enabling contexts in Austrian society in order to succeed in studies.

## Summary

The point of discussion in this thesis is factors that bring about success in tertiary studies with respect to Black African students in Austria. Perrier Bourdieu's capital theory and its elements – field and habitus will be employed to explain the resources students may need in order to succeed in studies. The resources of students could easily be traced in those theoretical paradigms. Socio-economic status, previous education background etc. that are found to be influencing success in studies is what Bourdieu meant by cultural capital. Social capital is also implied by what researchers on success/failing to succeed in studies termed “social integration”.

I equally employed psychological resources of human beings known as Agency theory due to its frequent occurrence in literature on this topic. It is also noted that agency

recourses do not work in vacuum but in a complex social settings which could be termed “field” according to Perrier Bourdieu. The complex social setting in the case of students is not only in the tertiary institution but their entire environment. Black African students in Austria are thus confronted with Austrian society, immigration and foreign student polices as well as Austrian academic world. The combination of the above theories could reveal (1) why some Black-Africans do not try to study at all; (2) why some tried and drop out and (3) why some succeeded.

## Chapter 4 Method

### Introduction

What I sought from the respondents are the things that motivated them to tertiary studies, what they went through during their studies in Austria, and those factors which they think that made them succeed in their studies. This will help me to obtain the answers to the questions I wish to answer through this work. In this chapter, I will state and highlight the analytical method used in this thesis. The reasons for choosing qualitative research method and the processes of data collection and coding will be discussed.

### 4.1 Why qualitative research methods?

The task of identification of factors that influence the outcome, in this case, the successful completion of graduate study of Black Africans in Austria could be best obtained through the quantitative research (Creswell, 2009:18). However, there has not been any research on this topic concerning Black Africans. There is the basic need of understanding what the Black students are experiencing in Austria, what they actually need and so on. Which variable are to be examined is very difficult to determine at this stage. Consequently an explorative research of this kind is unavoidable (ibidem).

A mixed method could be ideal but time and the available resources made mixed method impossible for this work (ibidem). A statistical data collection approach to obtain a representative sample may not be scientifically satisfying for the reasons that, (1) large number Black-Africans in Austria do not have orderly residence address or telephone; Ebermann reported of about 1000-1500 illegal residents in Vienna (Ebermann 2002), and (2) the complexity of the research could be optimised through a detailed qualitative interview.

However when more time and resources are available, a further qualitative research is recommended to explore the variables that may come out of this research. Also looking into the aspects that may not have been taken care of in this research can yield inter-

esting input. Such further researches are necessary before a representative quantitative research could be carried out on the topic of Black African students in Austria.

I felt I want to know what happened in stages and phases of each respondent's academic life. The time line runs through the individual's academic life story. What was the respondents' motive for emigration? What were their daily experiences while studying in Austria? All these and some more may influence the individuals' success in - or failure to complete studies in Austria. To obtain such a deep insight made me to opt for the qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009:18).

Having the necessary information about the likely factors that could make students succeed or drop out from their studies in Austria and in the USA, and about the multi-dimensional nature of the factors, I decided to use the semi-structured interview. I used a loose partly structured interview - a friendly, neutral but highly goal oriented open ended questions (Atteslander, 2006:127ff). I was aware of the fact that majority of the Blacks don't enjoy telling their personal stories. Even more so when such stories reveal bad experiences. It is like opening the old wounds. Most of them don't enjoy speaking about their weaknesses. Of course, I did ask them, but I employed direct and indirect questioning approach (ibidem: 139).

## 4.2 Method of Analysis

The methodological approach of this work will be phenomenology. Through the story of how 12 men, first generation black Africans obtained an academic title in Austria; to **identify and describe the factors** that contributed to their success in tertiary education (Moustakas, 1994). The story includes the circumstances that surrounded the immigration of these 12 men to Austria. Why did they come to Austria? What is their social, academic and economic situation? What are their "abroad agendas"? And what are their heart desires? I will equally examine what they met as they arrived. In what social situation do they found themselves? Did they experience social exclusion, (do they feel socially excluded or rejected in Austria)? If yes what effect does it have on them?

Whatever reason that brought them here; and in whatever situation they found themselves, they studied and were successful in their studies. How did it happen? What kinds

of academic challenges did they face; starting from admission into the university up to the final year? How did they master the problems?

I hoped that the information I will get through their answers will tell what criteria – institutionalized and non-institutionalized opportunities, individual qualities and techniques have helped them to succeed in their studies.

The descriptions will be strictly from the participants' point of view. That is to say, I focused on my respondents' subjective experiences and interpretations of the world around them (Trochim, 2006). In this case, their existence in Austria and their Austrian academic world. Their experiences may have been to a great extent similar but there were individual differences or details. Such individual speciality could be mentioned at relevant points. This research had no intention to generalize.

### **4.3 Developing the Questions – analytical and interview questions**

The literature reviewed revealed some ideas in the form of factors that could influence success in the university studies and the hurdles that may be on the way. The five works that form my stepping stone in this topic I purposely choose because I saw them complementary. They covered personal characters, social and cultural capitals as well as institutional influences.

Among the personal characters are the student's aspirations, determination and persistence. Community supports, parent influence, peer group influence are part of the students social capital. Individuals' previous academic achievements, knowledge etc. form their cultural capital. There is the need for scholarship, good teacher-student interaction and counselling units, suggesting institutional opportunities.

Which of these opportunities are available for African students here in Austria? There was a catalogue of questions that the respondents had to answer. Four analytical questions that could enable me answer the research question posed in this work were developed. They are:

1. What circumstances surrounded the immigration of the successful Black African Students in Austria?

2. Do Black Africans who were successful in tertiary education in Austria experienced social exclusion? If yes (they feel socially excluded or rejected), what effect does it have on the respondents?
3. What academic challenges do first generation of African Sub-Saharan students face in Austria?
4. What criteria – institutionalized and non-institutionalized opportunities, individual qualities and techniques helped successful Black African students in Austria to overcome such barriers mentioned in analytic questions 1-3?

### **Interview Questions**

I put up a-three-category of open ended questions and some sub questions to guide me during the interview. I did not leave out some demographic questions<sup>26</sup>. Here are the three category questions.

1. Questions that seek to learn about the challenges a first generation Black African could face when attempting to study in Austria.
2. Questions posed to find out the factors that could contribute to successful completion of graduate studies for such candidates in Austria.
3. Questions to ascertain the circumstances that surrounded such individuals, with hope of getting any other information that could be relevant for objective interpretations and validation of individual responses.

## **4.4 Site selection, Participants Selection**

I opted for first generation of Black-African students in Austria - graduates who studied/final year students studying at different universities in Austria. The selection of site and individuals was based on the above criteria (Creswell, 2009:178). Access to women candidates was problematic. Few of them who showed interest have had no time for such an intensive interview; hence, in the end, the thesis was adapted to research about male students (BAMSA) only. Likewise I could not get anyone who studied in Vienna

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<sup>26</sup> The detailed questions are attached in Attachment 6.

Business University (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien). Only one graduate of the University in Graz made himself available for the interview. Another respondent came from the Polytechnics [Fachhochschule] on Wiener Neustadt. Another candidate came from the School of Audio Engineering in Vienna. Candidates were selected from the two main branches of studies – natural science and human science. I wanted to examine if there could be found any difference between natural and human science among the respondents.

I attempted to gain access to my respondents in four ways. At first I phoned or e-mailed those I had the contacts of. Those I knew who studied in Austria or are still studying, which I guessed that they might be in their final year. I told them informally about my project and my request that they participate in the qualitative interview. Everyone I contacted in this category show interest but only five of them turned up for the interview. They could hardly find the time for the interview. They did not show any scepticism or worries but were purely short of time even when I offered to meet them at any place and at any time of their convenience.

The second attempt was to approach any black person I see on the street. I would ask them if s/he is a student or has studied in Austria. A few persons confirmed to have studied or that they still study. Some of them meet my requirements others did not. None of those who met the requirements were ready to do the interview immediately. They gave me their e-mail address but not their telephone number. I sent e-mails to them with a short description of the project and about seven main questions of the open ended questions. Some of them replied to the e-mail and promised to give me a call but others did not. But none of this group turned up for the interview even after several reminders.

Thirdly, I tried to reach some persons through their friends. Contacts were given to me. I wrote e-mails and made phone calls. Seven persons were interviewed through this way. Others ended up promising they will phone me for the interview. I kept reminding them until I had twelve interviews. Finally I went to institutes and some university libraries. I caught some “fishes” through this effort; however some of them were not mature. Well, the 12 interviews I had were sufficient. My professor gave me the go ahead, that I may sort out what these men said - the things that helped them to complete their academic career successfully.



## 4.5 The 12 Participants

Six out of the twelve respondents studied at Vienna University. The rest are from BOKU, Fachhochschule, School of Audio Engineering, University of Graz, and Diplomatic Academy. Seven persons among the twelve came from Nigeria; others were from Cameroon (2), Burundi, Senegal, and Ivory Coast. Three of the respondents came to Austria much early than others; two in 1977 and the other in 1979, started their studies 1977/78 and finished in 1980, 1982 and 1988 respectively. Three participants came to Austria in the 1990s (1990, 1998 and 1999). Others came between 2001 and 2004.

Seven of the respondents studied human science, the rest five studied natural science. The human sciences they studied were: business administration, financial management and accounting, digital film, nursing science, linguistics, international development, sociology and political science. Natural sciences on the other hand were medicine, pharmacy, physics/material engineering, natural resources management, ecology and Phytomedicine.

Eight of the participants have completed their studies. Three out of the rest were already writing their thesis and one participant hoped to finish early next year. One out of the twelve respondents did his Master's and Doctorate degree here in Austria. Two persons obtained double Master's Degrees (Diplom-Ingenieur) in different disciplines; the rest had obtained or aspired for Doctor of Medicine and Master's Degree.

## 4.6 Data collection – the Interviews, the transcription

An e-mail was sent to the participants (the same e-mail I sent earlier, requesting for the participation) with the following information: a summary of the concept for my thesis, the topic, my motivation and the research objectives, general criteria for eligibility and a guarantee of anonymity.

Before the interview with any of the participants started, the summary of the concept for my thesis was repeated and explained in a simpler way. I did ask the respondents if they understood what is expected of them and if they are willing to contribute to the project. All were willing and found the research useful for the Blacks in Austria. I also informed the respondents that the interviews will be digitally recorded for a full tran-

scription. I reassured them of anonymity. Thus crucial ethical formalities for the interview were implemented (Creswell, 2009:87ff; Groenewald, 2004).

I did three of the interviews as a pre-test, after which some of the questions were modified. In some cases, I kept reformulating the questions, in order to keep the respondents in the past memory (Atteslander, 2006:141). For example, in cases when the respondents started telling me what they think about the topic, I would redirect the questions in order to hear what they experienced. I noted other sub-questions associated with questions 1-6. In the course of the interviews, I skipped some questions when the respondent commented on that question while answering the proceeding questions.

The interviews were intensive. The time range was from 40 minutes to 1hour 30 minutes. The respondents were open, ready to answer all questions. Only one participant hold back his comments about his bad experiences in what he called “Austrian system” when I asked him to tell me some of those experience. He took a deep breath, shook his head and said “forget it, it is personal”. He became sad, and I sensed, I was bruising an old wound.

Most segments of the interviews were full of emotions, shaking of heads, deep breaths, and bitter smiles or laughing over stress. I was amazed at what these students were going through. I had terrible feelings during each of the interviews. There were reflections on some things I experienced as well. I was amazed how some of them took notice of little details. Nevertheless, the signs of happy end could be read in the whole story and of the bright future which they aimed at. They were grateful to have had the opportunity of studying in Austria. And their advice to any potential student was, never to give up.

The transcription was verbatim. Some of the sentences were modified but retained the words used by the respondents. Two of the interviews were conducted in German language but transcribed directly into English language. I have enough German language knowledge to present the questions and understand my respondents. Also with the help of digital recording, I had a quiet time to transcribe them correctly. In those cases when the respondents answered my questions off point, I corrected them during the interviews, and later I translated the corrected question leaving out the off-points.

Some of the respondents were bold and open. They mentioned names and named the places where their experiences took place. For the principle of anonymity, the names of

persons and places were left out or replaced with letters of the alphabet during the transcription (Creswell, 2009:91).

## **4.7 Data Coding**

In the attempt to identify themes and patterns from the word-for-word transcripts, I started with the pre-set categories. The ideas as contained in the fourteen categories listed from the literature were searched for in the transcript of the answers of each of the respondents. In the process of searching for the 14 categories that I found in the literature, other factors emerged. In all, 30-items (words or ideas) mentioned by the respondents - as having a negative or positive influence during their university studies in Austria - were sorted out.

## **Summary**

The methodological approach to this work was phenomenology. The descriptions of what made the BAMSA to succeed in their studies came exclusively of the BAMSA's point of view. Focus was on their subjective experiences and how they interpreted these. The choice of the research topic of this thesis through qualitative approach gave rise to choosing phenomenology as analytic method for the data generated. There has not been a research on the topic of Black African students in Austria. And there is the need for an in-depth understanding of the circumstances that surround Black Africans studying in Austria; hence the qualitative research.

The participants were chosen by convenience. However an attempt was made to have a representative sample of both, private and public universities. The representation also included those who studied natural and human sciences as well as first and second degree programs. The BAMSA came from five Sub-Saharan African countries. The interview was semi-structured and lasted between 40-90 minutes and was transcribed verbatim. All statements and ideas that they saw as hindrances and criteria for success in studies were coded. The next chapter is a presentation of the findings.

## Chapter 5 General findings

### Introduction

In this chapter, the circumstances that surrounded the immigration of the 12 successful BAMSA will be presented. To be answered is also the question whether the 12 BAMSA who were successful in tertiary studies experienced social exclusion. If yes (they felt socially excluded or rejected), what effect did such experience have on them? The academic challenges the BAMSA described will be part of this chapter. And the criteria which they said that helped them to overcome such barriers will be listed. First on the list of my findings are the circumstances that surrounded the immigration of the 12 respondents.

### 5.1 Circumstances that surrounded the immigration of the BAMSA interviewed

*“In my studies I had everything. I just had to study. No strategy other than to face my study”. (BAMSA-4).*

The claim above is a response from one among the respondents who I termed “privileged student”. He told me that, he came on scholarship, student visa, and planned to return home after studies (he did return but later came back to take up an appointment in Austria]. He added that, he learned German language in his home country and came on two different periods for his Master’s and Doctorate degree programme. He claimed not to have experienced German language as a problem and financially, he had no complain. His whole challenge was to study.

The second group I termed “Foreign students”. As “foreign students” they said, they intend to return home after studies. However they have a second plan to stay and work for some time in Austria before going back home. Or re-migrate - depending on their chances. BAMSA-9 is an example from this group. He said:

Although my hope was to go to USA; I never know I will land in Austria. But I had always wanted to go to abroad to study. I have the thought that after I get the foreign certificate it will give me more opportunity in Africa (BAMSA-9).

Two participants from this group said they had their first degree from their home country. The two came for advanced studies e.g. Master programme.

Finally, there is the third category which I call immigrant students – the remaining three respondents. According to them, they sought for asylum in Austria. Only one of them received positive reply from the asylum office. They equally claimed to have no intention of returning home soon after completing their studies, and for a later re-migration. One among the three candidates had his first degree from his home country. He is writing his Master thesis at the time of this interview.

Irrespective of the type, the respondents are mature men – aged 25 to 40 at the time of their studies. This is the age of full responsibility, at least for oneself, but to a great extent of social responsibility. 50% of them (5 married) said they have nuclear family; one with three kids, the rest five respondents had each two kids during their studies. They equally spoke of caring for siblings and extended family.

Generally the participants claimed to have had a good education upbringing, at least the basic qualification to study in Austria. They said they came to Austria to study, or that they have “studies” on their “abroad agenda”.

I had my secondary school and got admission at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany. From there I transferred to Austria. I came to study and I started immediately (BAMSA-12).

Yes, yes and to study abroad too. I was thinking of going to Canada but I eventually came to Austria to study. Only to study was in my mind then and my family also, to take care of the children then (BAMSA-8).

I finished my secondary education and went to university, graduated and came to Austria to do my Masters. I went back to Africa and later came back to Austria to do my Doctorate studies (BAMSA-4).

Eight participants could be described as “simple foreign students”. They said they had obtained their admission into Austrian university/school while being still in their home country. They came as students with student visa. They claimed to be self-

sponsored, sponsored by their relations or supported by one organization or other in Austria.

The problem I had was financial problem but I have my sister here and my family back home. So the few times I had financial difficulty, I sought help from my family at my home country and they responded. They send me money. Finance is also a challenge but in my case I have family members here and they supported me (BAMSA-3).

The biggest problem was financial. I am someone that learn new language fast and easy but who will pay for my German course was a problem. The language was my first problem, not because it is difficult for me but because I had no sponsor. The organization [that helped me] is called "Don't wait". They paid for my German course. When I look back now, I would not have been able to pay (280€ per month) for this course if they did not help me. The university is free for Africans but the supplementary study has to be paid for. If a black African doesn't get financial support for that, coupled with food, house rent and other things, it is really a problem (BAMSA-5).

Only Ute Bock, Ute Bock organization helped me two times to pay my school fees; apart from that, no individual, no one. Make sure you have sufficient funds before you even start, because nobody will be able to help you financially here (BAMSA-10).

The respondents commented on how they saw this society when they came and their social and economic situation. BAMSA-9 said:

Some friends did give me advise what to do, in other to run away from this problems. At the beginning of my studies, I wanted to jump to marriage to run away from all this problems. Though I tried; I tried several ways to see if I can get myself settled but it did not work. It did not work for me. All failed (BAMSA-9).

## **5.2 Experience of social exclusion and the effect of it**

To learn about the experience of social exclusion the questions asked were: Did they feel rejected by this society? If yes, how do they handle the situation? The question was to see if the effect could be in the form of self-exclusion, frustration, or dissatisfaction.

All the respondents claimed to have experienced social exclusion but in a different degree of perception. Racism, segregation, marginalization were the words they used to describe their experiences.

Some experienced racism, segregation etc. at the university. BAMSA-1 said:

I am the only black [in the course]. Nobody wanted to sit where I was sitting. It was really embarrassing to see that people that call themselves grown-up - above 18 years of age, that are in the university can segregate themselves that way. It was really a very difficult moment. That might even scare you out from coming in.

Commenting on his admission experience he said:

This woman wanted to trick my admission by pure racism. Not for academic reasons or for the sake of my qualification. It was later that I heard that this woman had frustrated a lot of us. This woman I don't know her before, I have had nothing to do with her before but my colour is very ..., I don't know which experience she had with my colour before. She doesn't want black people [with a deep breath] (BAMSA-1).

Some of them experienced social exclusion in the employment system and in their day to day life.

There was no chance. I didn't perceive any chance. In this country, they have to consider their citizens first. Unlike we Black, we are not highly welcomed here - in this country. At the time I came newly, the racism was too high. The segregation, the difference between Black and White was too high; talk-less of to have job (BAMSA-9).

I felt marginalized. It happened to me when I got a job in a company and I looked for a working permit to do the job but the employment office refused. The reason they gave was that this job was for the Austrians that they have the first of choice. [They said] that, if there is no Austrian who can do that job, then it can be given to me. I waited a month and went back again they said NO that this job is not for foreigners. That I should keep waiting. I waited and the three months I supposed to do this job was gone and I was like ... I won't call it rejected but I will say I was marginalized because I am a foreigner. I was bitterly disappointed. I felt like crying. I said why are they doing this to me? What is going on? I thought, even though those laws were there; I thought I could have luck or something like that. It happened to me and I took it as a lesson (BAMSA-3).

Reflecting on his experience in the university, he said:

I expected discrimination because of colour and a kind of prejudice. I expected that I might be marginalized but in the course of my study I realized that it was not really the case. They treated everybody as students. The marginalization was also there but from the students not from the professors. It is from the students I experienced marginalization (BAMSA-3).

No self-exclusion noticed, hence they are successful in their studies. Rather psychological torture, deep emotional burden and mental overload.

Of course, of course! [I feel rejected by this society]. I thought many times about it. It is a very long story. If I start talking about it, we will not finish today. It is about the government and the system of things ... Let's leave it; it is private. **My reaction was that I did not give up. I didn't allow them to frustrate me. I still try to do the right thing at the right time.** The environment is not conducive. Even for the fact that they know that you are a student, when the police control you here. Some they have monitored you, we are not fools. You know when someone is following you. They will follow you to any extent. They are not yet convinced.

The society itself is nothing to write home about. The society, I mean people's behaviour. They are very conservative and they easily call you the N-Words. It is very easy here. You will be going on your own, going your way; someone will just come out from nowhere, and start calling you names. Those challenges, you know; man can bear a physical injury but not a catastrophic insolence (BAMSA-10).

Commenting on how he went about the experience of social exclusion and his reaction to it, respondent one and eight gave thus:

Of course, they don't want us. We are just forcing ourselves. (laughing ...) Don't worry! Be happy! That is the solution (continued laughing). Don't worry, be happy my brother (BAMSA-1).

The relationship was good. Maybe because of this idea I developed that time. I did not see anything that happened to me that it is because I am black. You see this people they have different mentality. Sometimes they will say something good about you but some will say something bad. All the same, I did not see that as a problem (BAMSA-8).

### 5.3 The academic challenges the BAMSA faced

The academic system was challenging for them but with good facilities. By “academic challenges” I mean language, the lectures, exams, learning processes.

The system here is challenging but the atmosphere is conducive. Nobody complains of electricity unlike where we came from. Here you can do your exams whenever you want, but there, in Africa even if you are sick you have to carry it over. But here you can quickly send your professor an e-mail explaining why you cannot be able to take your exams at a particular time with a doctor's report or



whatever. It is a very big asset. Where we came from it is not like that. I think the conditions here are much better (BAMSA-10).

Language was a very big problem. I was the best but the language was a problem. It was technical, I was able to do and show everything but I could not explain. The professors were excited. Physics, chemistry, mathematic and electronic, I could calculate whatever was given. They are the same with what I did in Africa. We had equipment that students could take home and bring them back. Other students cluster and see them only in the school, I always take them home. Sometimes I sleep with camera on my bed. I want to know everything about it. That is wonderful here in Austria to study. In Africa you can only hear about the equipment or see them in pictures but here you can touch them. That was my strength. If I can touch anything, I need not to read much about it. I will turn it upside down and see how it works. (BAMSA-6).

To my respondents, working and not working was additional stress to studying.

[Another] challenge or obstacle is working and studying. From experience, I worked and studied at the same time, I found out it is not easy. We are in a foreign land, so joining both work and study is really hard. If one didn't put much effort, he will lag behind and might end up not finishing his studies. So working and studying is a challenge. You have to look for work and look for working permit. These two things distracted me (BAMSA-3).

I did all kinds of job, in hotel, restaurant, Opera etc. but part time. If I may advice, instead of normal university, one should go for polytechnics. There you can do your courses in the evening and on the day you can work to earn your living. To study and work at the same time is almost impossible (BAMSA-6).

Some of the respondents lacked good studying culture i.e. in reading, concentration and deep understanding when German language was used.

Time was also a challenge; to have time to study and the concentration; because you are pursuing two things at the same time. You are studying and you still have to get something for the people you left at home (BAMSA-2).

We Africans come late always. A student should be punctual. We must read a lot. Many Africans don't read. We are curious but curious about something else. In Africa, we do not have many libraries like here. The problem is that we go to library only when we need some information. We don't read (BAMSA-6).

Some of them claimed to have gone the extra mile– read/study harder in order to be successful.

There also have to be hard working and dedication as per trying to do you student work. Not trying to buy time with staying in the university without going for the exams, reading etc. (BAMSA-3).

I had to work night and day, and study in the day; it was really stressful, and in fact it took me all my 24 hours (BAMSA-11).

There was the feeling of being disadvantaged when compared to local students but not being inferior to them.

You should not be an average student; try to be above average so that you can compete with them. A genius who is a black African doesn't compete with genius here. They don't give you the opportunity. You will only be competing with average students here not even above average. For you to have an upper hand you must be two steps ahead of them. That is my own finding. Try to go extra mile in your academics - work harder. If they are scoring 60% try to score 90%. In that case things will not be difficult for you (BAMSA-10).

All but one respondent were challenged by German language. Some were challenged by Latin.

The biggest obstacle is the language" (BAMSA-2).

The only challenge was to do Latin. They insisted that I should do Latin for my studies. It was a big challenge to me because I didn't have any basic in Latin. It was difficult (BAMSA-4).

## 5.4 The criteria for the BAMSA's success in studies

### Moving from the known to the unknown: How 30 criteria emerged

Only but two of the categories found in literature reviewed – parental influence and gender did not appear in any of the responses in the sense how they were defined in those researches on succeeding or dropping out of studies. In the researches reviewed, parental influence was defined in the sense that parents are aware, knowledgeable about the educational system, and are involved in the enrolment and educational processes of their children. This was not the case for any of my respondents. This could be explained by the fact that my respondents are first generation BAMSA. Only one of the respondents said that his senior brother studied in Germany and participated actively in his admission process. Even when parental influence was mentioned, it was in the sense that they were role models as graduates and hard workers. It became much appropriate to

merge parental influence with family influence which will be discussed later in this section.

Gender, on the other hand “gender” was mentioned rather in the sense of gender role and as bread winners; not in any form as an advantage or disadvantage as indicated in Carla O'Connor (2002). Women were seen in O'Connor (2002) as being disadvantaged in academic process. Only in one case a respondent suggested his being a man played a role in his readiness to face any situation. He stated that:

During my studies I know that there will always be problems but problems are meant to be tackled. In my family we were raised to be men. Sometimes we shake but we are not scared. No I did not envisage any problem, which could be huge or small (BAMSA-4).

Because this research did not take into account the experiences of Black African women students in Austria, it remains open if women would list gender as a factor or not. The research done by Carla O'Connor was purely on Black American women who studied in the 1960s. Maybe this could explain why they listed gender as a challenge to their tertiary education.

The 12 factors/ideas taken from the four literature sources mentioned above could be found as a whole or as a part in the responses of the interviewees. For the sake of clarity and to achieve better exclusive categories, I will define the categories based on the ideas or words as used by my respondents. That means, I may not define them using the exact wordings as in the quoted literature but the ideas will be represented in part or in their full meaning. The additional 18 categories will be defined in the same manner.

The respondent who mentioned the lowest numbers of these factors got 50% of them. The most had about 85% of the 30 factors. Ten out of 12 respondents each mentioned 2/3 of the factors which amounts to about 70% of the factors.

### **A two sided coin**

There are some of the categories that are positive in nature; e.g. self-efficacy, locus of control, family support etc. When such categories are mentioned they are clearly seen as criteria for success when studying at Austrian university. The absence of such categories brings the BAMSA closer to be a dropout. There are entirely negative factors listed by the respondents, such as leisure (having fun), segregation, necessity of bread winning

etc. The absence of these factors brings the BAMSA forward. Their presence results in stress.

Therefore, for a better differentiation, I decided to add a characteristic (an adverb) to a negative factor to neutralise the meaning. For instance “segregation” becomes “less segregation”. Therefore the idea could now be that, the lesser the segregation, the higher the chances of a BAMSA to be successful. In the same sense, “leisure” becomes “less leisure”. Another case was represented by a factor that could have both, positive or negative connotation. For instance “peer-influence” could be positive or negative. In that case I attached a positive adjective to make the factor a criterion for success. Conclusively, “peer-influence” which was used in the literature became “positive peer-influence”, and “family influence” became “positive family influence” in this work.

The respondents commented on these factors in both ways (positive or negative) depending on the question posed. The factors which are featured as challenges, difficulties or threats; when they are less frequently present in the answers, it indicate that the BAMSA will succeed better. The factors seen as advantage, positive and helpful, left no ambiguity in seeing them as criteria for success. Hence the result is that, the presence of the 30-items makes BAMSA successful or more successful in the studies but the other side of the coin can cause a regress in the studies and could make the BAMSA a drop-out.

The pattern and categorization of the 30 criteria appear in two dimensions – *personal factors* and *social factors*. They consist of four categories – (1) *internal qualities* – which I termed *psychological resources*, (2) *cultural capital* (3) *institutionalized factors* and (4) *social capital*.

Personal factors group together psychological qualities and cultural capital. They are behaviours i.e. one’s beliefs, choices, determination, courage etc. that makes the student to go into- and persist in studies. They also include those academic qualities and qualifications a person needs in order to complete academic tasks in a tertiary institution. Such qualities and qualifications in accordance with Perrier Bourdieu’s capital theory I called *cultural capital*. All the factors that positively influence the student from outside (externally) – meaning both social and political influences - were termed *social factors*.

## Two dimensions

The two dimensional categorization of the factors allows to view them as personal and social factors. Both academic factors and personal characteristics could just be termed personal factors. These are the potentials of the student and the actions resulting from them. He possesses some of them already and it is in his power to regulate the others. For instance it can be his preparation for the studies, his academic background, his ability and effort to learn a language etc. It could be agreed that such ability to engage in academic tasks or achieve such academic results can be rooted in the student's psychological characteristics – his determination, interests, patience, emotional control, his readiness to give up leisure etc. I took note of this psychological aspect because it was frequently mentioned in the literature and the respondents spoke of these features as a decisive factor for their success while studying in Austria (see discussions and references on psychological resources (page 85)).

The social factors are those factors that are to a great extent determined and influenced by the environment. The respondents created the impression that, they are not only the acting agents of such achievements like resident permit, financial stability, positive peer and family influences, good teacher-student relationship etc. They claimed that they may also be able to contribute to the outcome. For example, the student could contribute to having good relationship with the teachers, making contact with other students/BAMSA, maintain his financial stability etc. Nevertheless, not everything depends on him.

Conclusively, two dimensions – *personal factors* and *social factors* could emerge. The validation of whether the 30 criteria are of two, three or more categories could be demonstrated through the quantitative research method. The employment of correlation analysis, reliability analysis and explorative factor analysis could produce two or three or more factors. Meanwhile, figure 2 is the two-dimensional schema of the criteria.

Ch. 5; Figure 2: Two Dimensions, Personal and external factors

Personal Factors	Social Factors
<p><i>Cultural Capital</i></p> <p>A good academic Background</p> <p>Good choice of Course being studied</p> <p>A good preparation for studying in Austria</p> <p>A reliable study Time plan</p> <p>Less Work and more of studying</p> <p>Good Studying Culture</p> <p>Mastering the Language</p> <p>Considerable Study period</p> <p><i>Psychological Resources</i></p> <p>Intention to study</p> <p>The value of education</p> <p>Locus of control</p> <p>Self-efficacy</p> <p>Less Leisure</p> <p>Emotional Control</p>	<p><i>Institutionalized Factors</i></p> <p>Affirmative Actions</p> <p>Stable Resident Permit</p> <p>Financial Stability</p> <p>The absence of Glass ceiling effect</p> <p>Less Segregation</p> <p>Good Teacher-student interactions</p> <p>Short Distance</p> <p>Good Facilities/Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Social Capital</i></p> <p>Interacting with native Students</p> <p>Relating with Austrians</p> <p>Less family responsibility</p> <p>Positive Family influence</p> <p>Positive Peer influence</p> <p>Role Model</p> <p>Contact with former Black African Students/Graduates</p> <p>Solidarity</p>

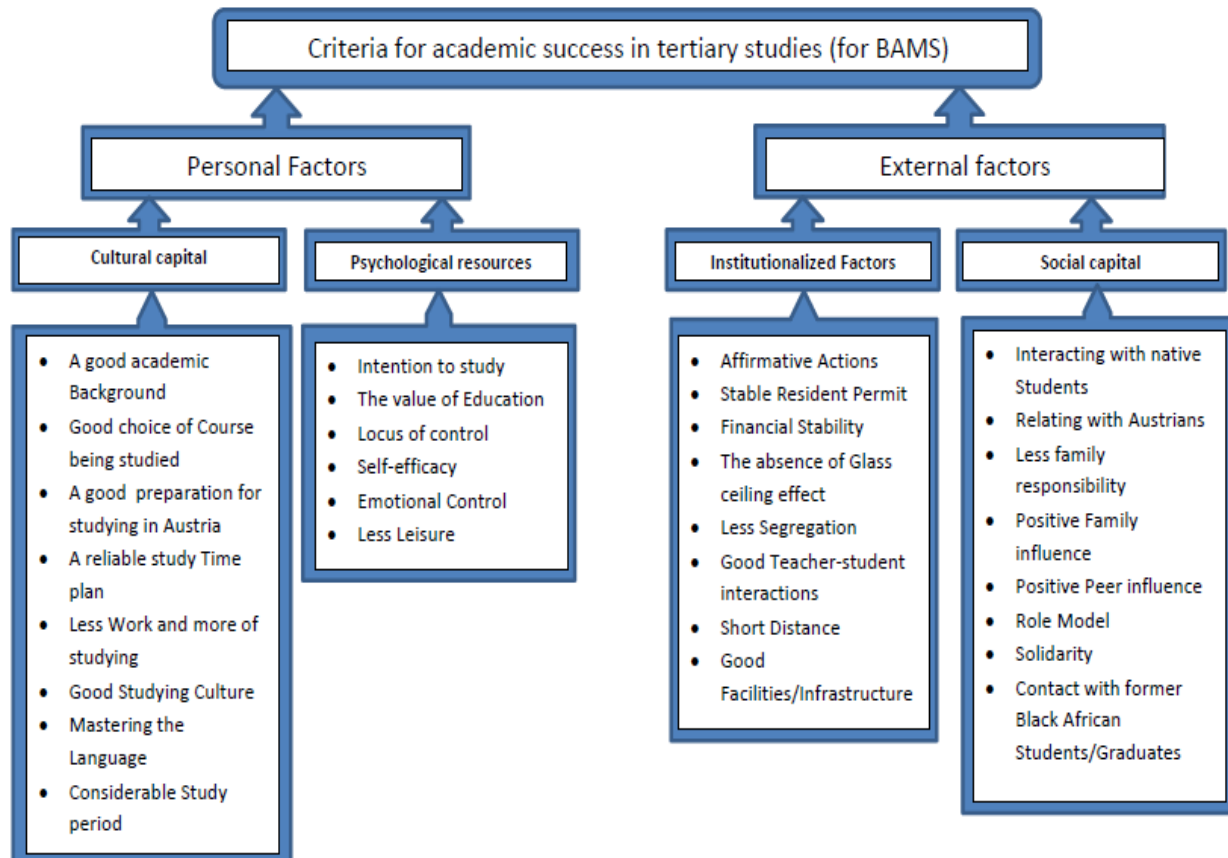
Source: figure prepared by Asuke Patrick

#### Four categories

Factors one through eight speaks of ideas which have to do with individual academic qualities. I termed this category “cultural capital”; whereas factors nine through 14 are internal qualities/actions of the student. This second category I called “psychological resources”. The rest of them are social factors which could be split into two to represent institutionalized factors and social capital. The 8 items (15 through 22) I termed “institutionalized factors”. They are those factors that are politically manipulated, and the faculty policies. They include legal marginalization, provision of studying facilities, affirmative actions etc. Finally, the respondents spoke of social capital: good fami-

ly/student relationship, positive peer influences etc. They form the rest of the ten items that increased the chances of success for the BAMSA interviewed. Figure 3 is a category schema containing the categories arranged under the categories.

Ch. 5; Figure 3: Category Schema: Four Categories



Source: figure prepared by Asuke Patrick

This implies that, for the BAMSA to be successful in their studies, they employed some psychological resources. They possessed the cultural capital that was necessary to study in Austria. And there were institutionalized opportunities as well as social capital for them. These four categories of factors were needed in some quantity to ensure the successful take off and safe landing for the BAMSA interviewed. These factors in all levels of categories provide answer to my question in this research. *What criteria/factors could account for a successful tertiary education of Black Africans who wish to study in Austria?*

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## Summary

Among other findings discussed in this chapter there is the fact that there are typical foreign students among the respondents. One of them had scholarship; others were sponsored by relatives or self-sponsored. They came with student visa and planned to return home after completing their studies. I labelled some of the respondents “immigrant students”. They were also sponsored or self-sponsored but had no intention of returning home soon after their studies and they may re-migrate. Three persons from this group sought for asylum in Austria. They were trying to obtain the permanent residence. The respondents were mature students. They were between 25 and 40 during their studying period. 10 of them must care for either their nuclear family, extended family or both. They claimed to have a good education. Four of them had their first degree from their home country. They claimed to have come to Austria to study, or at least had the plan to study on their “abroad agenda”.

All the respondents claimed to have experienced social exclusion but in different ways and environments. Some experienced it at the university, others in the employment system and in their daily life. They felt psychological and emotional burden. Working and not working was the additional stress to studying. The academic system was challenging for them but they appreciated the good facilities and equipment. Some of them claimed to have lacked good studying culture i.e. in reading, ability to concentrate or the ability of a deeper understanding as a result of their poor knowledge of German language and the necessity of working while studying at the same time. They claim to feel disadvantaged but not inferior to the native students. Discussing the criteria that helped them to succeed in their studies, they identified 30 factors. The factors were graded in four categories – (1) *Psychological resources*, (2) *Cultural capital* (3) *Institutionalized factors* and (4) *Social capital*.



## Chapter 6: Discussing the Criteria

### Introduction

At this junction, it is advisable to explain what each category means for my respondents and how they perceived/experienced them in the course of their studies. The criteria will be compared with the ideas found in the reviewed literature and other relevant literature sources on this topic. I will present the criteria under two dimensions. In the course of the discussion the importance or significance of each criterion will be defined, based on how often the respondents mentioned it. But this is not to form a hierarchical presentation of the factors. Their significant values could be sought for in further quantitative and representative researches. Presently, here is how the respondents described the criteria and how they appeared in the earlier research works.

### 6.1 Personal Factors (Cultural capital and Psychological resources)

#### 6.1.1 *Cultural capital*

The cultural capital is a combination of eight factors/ideas indicated by the respondents as helpful for the success in their studies. According to them, parts of the cultural capital were already acquired from the individual's previous education, in the form of certificates, information, plans and academic targets. The meaning and how the BAM-SA experienced this category is better seen and understood by reading their responses.

##### 6.1.1.1 A good academic background

The first in this category is a good academic background. It has to do with the individual's acquired qualification from the home country; if the respondent has a personal academic history. Since the sample deals with tertiary education; they must have gotten their basic education here in Austria or from their country of origin. According to the respondents who were graduates from their country of origin, they were instructed to attend a German course prior to proceeding with their core studies. The undergraduates

said they were advised to attend preliminary studies courses according to the field of study they've chosen. This is to bring the undergraduates up to Austrian's secondary school standard.

I asked my respondents about their academic life history, what their educational qualification(s) was/were when they came to Austria. According to their responses, all the respondents had at least a secondary education. Four of them had their first degree already in their country of origin. Here are some of their responses.

I finish my class 5<sup>27</sup>. After that, I just passed out and there was no perspective. I was not having any job, I did not get job, I was just roaming around until I went to do exam and I passed IMT. I went to do marketing in IMT<sup>28</sup>. I did not finish the IMT but within this time I was roaming around, I was taking GCE advanced level. I was able to pass three exams at that time. And I heard that with those exams I can study in university in Europe if I come with it. So I came with it (BAMSA-1).

I had a BSA in Business Accounting (BAMSA-2).

I went to Catholic Seminary School; that was the secondary education I had. After some years I went to a university in Africa and completed my graduate studies - Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. I came here for my Masters (BAMSA-10).

I had my secondary school and got admission in the Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany. From there I transferred to Austria (BAMSA-12).

I had 5 ordinary levels, 5 a-levels, which made a total of 14 ordinary levels; I passed in both arts and sciences. So I decided to apply here and in France. Ordinarily, I thought France would have been better because of the language but I applied in Austria and in France at the same time, but the response from Austria, from the Austrian university came faster and I was granted a Masters' study before that from France came (BAMSA-11).

At least this basic factor must be met. I did not run into anyone who did come to Austria as first generation immigrant with no secondary education that completed his study. There could be such candidates but I did not meet them.

Poor academic background could prevent a person from studying at the university or, in the long run, it could contribute to a dropout. Kolland (2002) showed some correla-

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<sup>27</sup> Secondary school

<sup>28</sup> Polytechnic: Institute of Management and Technology

tion between high school grades, repetition of classes and success in university studies (p. 37ff; Gold, 2005). These are the identical problems addressed in the preliminary courses for foreign undergraduates (*Vorstudiumlehrgang*) in Austria – the programmes designed to boost up their academic background. It tries to eliminate one major cause of dropping out “*Distanz zum Studium*” (estrangement in studies); when studies could become very abstract or when the loss of interest could set in and the student becomes incompetent to study (Lewin, 1999). Good academic background increases academic performance in the tertiary studies and influences success (Ansalone, 2009:70; Meinefeld, 1999).

#### 6.1.1.2 Good choice of courses

Interest in the course was crucial for the respondents. Zalaquett, (2005) pointed out that, poor choices in postsecondary education might hinder or delay the chances to achieve a higher education degree (p. 39). Good choice of course increases interest in studies. Interest is one among the human agency theories (psychological resources) which form motivation for achievement (Alexander et al., 1994; Hidi/Harackiewicz, 2001; Schiefele, 1999)

All my respondents admitted to have chosen the courses of their interest, in the field they studied before or the one they could do best. Otherwise, in the long run, they may lose interest and, in the end, they are unable to pass the exams (Kolland, 2002:55). In Koch (1999), students reported to have falsely estimated their abilities which contributed to their dropping out of studies (cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999:148). My respondents gave following answers:

At the beginning I was thinking of studying mechanical engineering, computer engineering, all the courses that have weight and where you think you can get some more money when you finish. So when I went to WU, I was doing that, I was also passing the exams but failing in this and that. I was really forcing myself, I was not scaling through. So I asked myself: what do I really want? I made up my mind to study what I think I can do best. I will tell my African brothers to forget about money and go home and think what you can do best and study that (BAMSA-1).

It has a link with what I did back at home. I did Business Accounting. Actually I wanted to do Business Administration, but I discovered that this one was also there and it was the same as what I did before, I decided to choose it. It is of personal interest. Yes! Personally, I have more interest in this Engineering, particularly infor-

matics technology. I did not study it because of the same problem I had at home. I was not able to get the admission to study that. I tried Accountancy; and it just worked out. But I am still thinking of this Engineering, particularly Electrical Engineering. I did not try it here because there is no need for me to try it (BAMSA-2).

As I came here, my senior brother studied in Germany. They advised me to do something that even if I do not get job I could be on my own. I did not like to do the same course my brother did so I choose another course (BAMSA-12).

If one makes wrong choice he may waste some time like four of the respondents who changed their courses and institutes. Respondent seven told me how he waited for five years before he was able to change to a course he believed he could do better.

As I said, the first course was difficult for me, I wanted to change my course but they refused. The law here is that if you are a foreign student you continue with the course you started with, until after five years; or if you are married to an Austrian. If you are married to an Austrian they can allow you to change but if not you must continue with the course you came to study until after five years. That is why I stayed for five years before I applied for this language studies (BAMSA-7).

### **6.1.1.3 A good preparation for studying in Austria**

This category measures how informed the respondents was, (1) about the course he had chosen, (2) about Austrian educational system, (3) about the possibilities of support and help in times of need. One of the features of *locus of control* (p. 88) is that the student will be proactive in seeking information and keen on knowing more about the circumstances that surround them.

Discussing the barriers to successful completion of college education, Zalaquett, (2005) mentioned minimal adult supervision. He said that uneducated parents could support their children's educational aspirations, but they had no experience with higher education (p.38). Such parents could not draw from their own experiences to know what information is needed, what questions to ask or where to go for answers. In the case of the BAMSA, their situation is not better. They have none of their parents or relations with them who are acquainted with Austrian education system.

Similar to lack of adult supervision is misinformation. Zalaquett stated that Latina/o students are often poorly informed or misinformed about postsecondary application processes and opportunities (Zalaquett, 2005:39). Furthermore the Latina/o students reported that only but a few educators provided little guidance about their higher educa-

tion (ibidem). The lack of information could be in the form of not knowing how to complete their college application, not knowing the cost of postsecondary education and of the availability of financial aid (ibidem).

The third barrier is the issue of poor choices. Zalaquett presented this as a product of the other two barriers already discussed. He said that

“(t)he combination of minimal adult supervision and poor information often causes Latina/o students to make poor choices about postsecondary education, choices that might hinder or delay their chances to achieve a higher education degree (p. 39).

When I asked how informed my respondents were about Austrian education system, how prepared they were; only five participants claimed to be somewhat informed about the system and some opportunities. Some of them claimed that, there are areas they were not informed. Here are their stories:

If you come from French speaking country, German is opposite of French. If German speaks from right to left, French will speak from left to right. The system is completely different. If one takes time like one year, two years or even three years to understand the system. Or if you are lucky you see someone who can tell you do it this way or that way, then you will succeed quickly but if not you will be faced with the problem of the language and the system. These are the two big problems.

A lady came here and wanted to study. She wanted to study translation. I told her, to put a second course maybe in her language, English or French. This will make her to be faster in her studies. She said no. After two years, I met her again she told me that I am right. She was having problem renewing her visa. I told her to do what I said and she then did it. She went to some lectures and at the end of the semester; she passed the subjects and could have a positive result to present in order to renew her visa (BAMSA-7).

I wasted a lot of time because I did not know what to do. How do I start studying here? How do I learn German? I have no money. How do I go to German course? Who will finance it? I should not have spent three years seeking for the opportunity of learning German. ... I have no idea, I did not ask and I was not informed. I started the study very bad. Now everything pile up together and I have to do much work in other to be successful. It was at the third semester before I had a glimpse of the work load, and then it was already too late (BAMSA-5).

That is one of the problems I encountered. Initially, I don't understand how the system goes - how to do the acknowledgement of my certificate transcript - the course which you are supposed to do and the ones you are not supposed to do. The se-

mester has almost gone before I got the information. I was somehow misled (BAMSA-9).

Here are the stories of five participants who were a little bit informed about the system and some of the opportunities:

In my faculty we have what they call "Skriptum" [handout]. I heard about it through a friend, that such a thing is in the faculty. I went and it was true. Each semester you have it. It is a summary and captions of all what you have to know. I will get them and get the text books. It really helped me. Yes, I knew all I had to do. At the beginning they removed physics and chemistry for me since I started studying at home. You see, before I came here I had to ask the people who are studying here. So they told me about the prospects, something like this free studying. So I know that my only problem was to take care of myself. So it is always good for one to be well informed about studying in a place before he comes (BAMSA-8).

BAMSA-8 spent five years battling with a course. Later he made it, and told me how:

I did not see anything that could form a problem. Even the exam that took me a lot of time to pass was not all that difficult for me but I was not passing it. It was later that my wife met a friend who was also a student and told him my problem with the course. The friend took her to another professor in my department. He gave them appointment for me to see him. When I met him, he asked me to produce the text books I was using to read for that exam. He said the text books were good for the theory but that I need a detailed text book for the practical. He recommended the text books which I bought and read it. I then passed the exam. I just did not have enough information. He also asked me if I do go to see my answer papers to know where I made the mistake after the markings. This I don't do; so he asked me to do that if I fail next time. Well the next time I passed the exam. I had no need to go and see my answer sheet (BAMSA-8).

Those who were fully informed gave this to answer:

Exactly, you are given all you have to do. You will see the challenges. It is like pre information. Then you have to get yourself ready and tackle it (BAMSA-10).

We got everything we will study at the beginning. I don't think it discouraged me or it should discourage anybody. I took it semester by semester. What I tried to do is to take exams, semester by semester. I did not see it that I have a lot to do or something like that. I took it step by step. I expected discrimination because of colour and a kind of prejudice. I expected that I might be marginalized but in the

course of my study I realized that it was not really the case. They treated everybody as students (BAMSA-3).

As one of the criterion for succeeding in studies, respondent nine gave this:

If you are well informed or well directed, either by the dean of the school, if you do ask question, you will make it. That will affect your success positively but if you are so adamant not wanting to know how the system works you will not make it (BAMSA-9).

If local students need a good preparation/information for studying in the university, BAMSA need it even more. In examining the reasons for dropping out from tertiary education, institutional rules, expectations and academic demands most often throw students over board. They became overwhelmed, disappointed and give up (Wittenberg/Rothe, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al, 1999: 106, 127). For some students, much needed counselling which would have been helpful at the start of their studies, came only in the middle of the studies. The BAMSA said they faced such situation – scrambling for information in the middle of studies or receiving some information too late. Davis (2002) suggests that to have counsellors who are of the same race or social background is more effective. The author discussed 30 universities who use people of colour in order to give a better attention to students of colour. Consequently students of colour are more successful in those universities than elsewhere (p.143).

#### **6.1.1.4 A reliable study time plan**

According to the BAMSA, they were not just students. Most of them are family fathers. Seven of them said they shoulder many other responsibilities. There should be time for everything: time to read, do homework, to work, time for the family etc. which should be followed. Only but three out of the BAMSA interviewed followed a study time plan which they set for themselves. Those who had a time plan and kept it said they were happy they did so. But those who could not have or hold to their study time plan saw it as a shortcoming and a threat to their success in studies. Only respondent No. 12 said that being focused and a strong determination proved to be an antidote for a failed study time plan. According to him, the study duration could be longer.

Still, examining the strategy which made my respondents to succeed in their studies, I asked the BAMSA, if they had a time plan and how they followed their study time plan. Here is how my respondents responded:

If you plan your time well for your study, you will make it (BAMSA-9).

You have to have a plan, if not; you know you have to present results for your student visa to be renewed (BAMSA-7).

I had a plan and a target. This target I reached (BAMSA-6).

Everything has its time actually. I had the time to take the children to the Kindergarten; I have the time to bring them back. There was time for the lectures and I go to the lectures. I read mostly at home. So everything falls into its time (BAMSA-8).

Yes. That's why I told to myself I must read at least five hours every day. I also wanted to finish within the set time-limit. It was five years they said it would take, but what also took me long was the thesis. The thesis took so long, almost two years, because of the experiment I had to do. That took me so long (BAMSA-11).

Of course you have time plan but sometimes it cannot work. As I told you the stipulated semester for my studies was nine but the best students finish it at thirteen. Those of us spent sixteen semesters. The main thing is to remain focused, with the thought that nothing will bring me out of the circle until you finish (BAMSA-12).

So many times I put up a time plan, but the body is weak to respond to the time plan. You could say, I will sleep from so and so time and do this or that after that. You will wake up from bed and could not be able to manage the situation. Somehow, somehow, the time plan was not followed (BAMSA-2).

That was my problem. I did not plan. I suppose to know how many courses I must do and how many do I need to do in each semester but this was not the case. I have no idea, I did not ask and I was not informed. I did not have any plan and that is why I must do more studies now. After the third semester I tried to have a time plan but I don't hold to it. Sometimes no chance in the courses I wanted to do; other times I must work. BAMSA should have a study plan, self-discipline (BAMSA-5).

The effect of this factor could be appreciated when we take factors like working and studying, having family during your studies into consideration. Since these three factors are strongly represented and they influence a reasonable study time plan; it could then be significant that not having a good study time plan could have a grievous consequence. Lack of adequate time for studying was frequently given as one of the reasons that cause dropping out of tertiary education (Koch, 1999 in Schröder-Gronostay, et al 1999:148).



### 6.1.1.5 Less work and more of studying

Working and studying at the same time, part time or full time - the respondents commented on this factor as a necessary evil. All the 11 self-sponsored respondents presented working as the only chance to survive in Austria without a scholarship. But then it was a big problem while studying, they say. They said it drove so many of their friends out of studies. Therefore they claimed that *less work and more of studying* guarantees success in study. Here are their responses:

The third problem came when I became accepted as a refugee in Austria; I went into the employment system. I registered in the employment office and they say, I should not study but I must work full time. I then started working full time and studying. This was a very big problem - working and studying. Many times I thought of quitting my studies (BAMSA-5).

[One] challenge or obstacle is working and studying. I worked and studied at the same time, I found out it is not easy. We are in a foreign land, so joining both work and study is really hard. If one didn't put much effort, he will lag behind; and might end up not finishing his studies. So working and studying is a challenge. You have to look for work and look for working permit. These two things distracted me (BAMSA-3).

Working and studying was also an obstacle, particularly when you are working in the night. There is a big stress involved - the stress in reading and that of working. There is a big stress in it. So many people could not manage the stress involved. For example, there is a guy we started together, after the first semester, he dropped out. He said he has a work and he has a family. He could not. He dropped out. There was also another n too, he has a wife, though he has no children but he said that, the wife was only the person taking care of the house that he has to work and support the wife. The wife was an Austrian. He was having academic stress and having financial stress. There is a friend of mine too, who work in one of the embassies. He tried too, but after some times, he dropped out. With the nature of the work, it was so stressful for him. For feeding and rent, that was why I was working. I was able to take care of that one. With my work, I had a problem; I did not do one course. But the work was helpful in a way to solve those problems of feeding, house rent and so on (BAMSA-2).

As I came here 2001 till 2006, we do not have the possibility to work. From 2006 they gave us the chance to work. They said that we have the right to work but we do not have the possibility. If you find a job you will not have the working permit to do it. So you have no possibility of solving your financial problems. I worked but it

is not part time or full time. People call me to help them and they pay me some money. It is like a help, it is not really a work (BAMSA-7).

None of my respondents did mention to have had an offer of a job so attractive that taking up this job would result in his dropping out of studies as identified by some researches as one of the reasons for dropping out (Kolland, 2002; Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999). Of course, for foreign students in Austria such offers do not come up often because of the restrictive employment laws for foreign students (AuslBG, 2011). Some of the respondents said they were exposed to jobs with difficult conditions of service. Some of them said they have to work at night; sometimes more than normal average working hours. For example, one of the respondents said he distributes newspapers in the night every day (Sunday to Sunday). According to him, he leaves home latest at 00.30am in the night and comes home 6.30am; amounting to 42 hours in a week. Read his story:

I had to do part time jobs, like distributing papers during the night; but then to get up early in the morning is very stressful. I had to work in the night and study in the day; it was really stressful, and in fact it took me all my 24 hours. The first 4 or 5 years when I came here, I had to do some small night jobs; get up very early-maybe 12 or 1am in the morning, then I work till 5am, then I go home and sleep, then get up again at 9am, go to school, come back maybe around 4pm, then start sleeping again, to get up next morning. I had to wake up around 9pm to start reading for almost 5 years. It was really tedious but since I knew what my plan was, it was bearable. And from the small job I was doing, I was able to pay my house rent and to take care of my needs. But it was really very difficult (BAMSA-11).

Working could take students away completely from studying as in the cases of drop-outs in Kolland (2002), Schröder-Gronostay et al., (1999) or inhibits their contact with other students/ teachers which could equally lead to the dropout (Kolland, 2002:71ff). One of the respondents told me how working affected his social integration and he advised thus:

I attempted to move with them (other students) but ... Maybe because I was not in the same social system with them, they do some get together, birthday party, opening day ...; because I have to work, so I was not always with them. Though they invited me but I have to work; I was not always with them. That made them to look at me as if I am far from them. Maybe if I have been doing that with them, go to all those functions, that would have made me to stay close to them. ... You know, you are here for the money and you are here for the studies. So these two

things, you have to put more interest on one and less interest on the other. If the interests in them are equal, you cannot make (studying) it. If you want to look for money and you are more interested in the money, you cannot make (studying) it (BAMSA-2).

People who have their parents here and they are studying; they are different. They may have the problem of the language but other things may be okay. Unlike those who are coming all the way from Africa alone, it is a problem. The money is a problem and a challenge. So the person who wants to study should put less attention in money. But there is no way you can pay your bills without having something to finance it. So you need a little of money to do it. I advise that anyone who wants to study should think less on money and focus more on studies (BAMSA-2).

#### **6.1.1.6 Good studying culture**

Discipline in reading, going to lectures, punctuality and taking the examinations I termed *good studying culture*. All the respondents spoke of this factor as a criterion for success in studies. Those who did not have this factor at the onset said they were forced to do so in order to succeed in their study. Among the reasons for dropping out of university cited by many researches were school duties being too many and the problem how to cope with the demands of studying (Lewin, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al, 1999:20; see also Kolland, 2002:73ff). The successful BAMSA claimed they have to go the extra mile in reading, learning and attending lectures – more so than the local students. As part of the strategies that helped them to be successful in studies, some of them responded like this:

Exactly, life is all about learning. If you don't adopt a personal strategy or skill for studying, you are not going to find it helpful. You've got to check yourself and adjust. From the adjustment a skill will come in your reading and writing. If not, you are not going to make it. My strategy is that I read in the middle of the night. I hardly sleep in the night. So I converted the night to reading and the day I use to sleep. I tried to do my exams as many as possible; I took it as a challenge to finish. I don't play with my exams and lectures. I try to be in the lectures. If I miss a class I find it very difficult (BAMSA-6).

I was brought up with waking up 4.00am in the morning. From childhood, everyone in the family must wake up 4.00am. I continued with this in my studies, every day, waking up 4.00am and reading. It was a law by my father and it followed me till today. Punctuality, when an African is punctual he will be successful in studies. You will not miss a lot of things. We Africans come late always. A student should be punctual. We must read a lot. Many Africans don't read. We are curious but curiosi-

ty on something else. In Africa, we do not have many libraries like here. The problem is that we go to library only when we need some information. We don't read (BAMSA-6).

I made up this policy that every day I must read for at least 5 hours out of the time I go to school. So I could write many subjects in a semester. At times, I used to write up to 14 subjects in one semester. This helped me to finish, to carry it out, to be more motivated. This reading policy was very nice. And I would advise every student to make up 5 hours every day just for your reading. Maybe in the morning you can read 2- 3 hours, then in the evening again, you can do 2-3 hours. I personally used to study most in the evening period. After lectures I would go to Afro-Asian Institute, where I used to read, there is a very calm hall. I used to read there, 4-5 hours. So, reading is one of the most important. That is the major strategy (BAMSA-11).

Those who did not have this factor at the onset told me their own story:

The mistake was academics. I did not spend much time on my studies. It was also as a result of the nature of the work I was doing. At the end of the work, I will be like a dead man. It was at the end of it that I started struggling, struggling, and struggling. So the [lack of] time and the concentration are mistakes. I thought it was going to be easy, but it was difficult (BAMSA-2).

I was the second problem. I am not organized as a person. I lack self-discipline. ... The second mistake was lack of plan in my studies. The third mistake was to watch world cup a whole semester, not studying. Could you imagine, I watched world cup a whole semester, with the parties that accompanied it (BAMSA-5).

#### **6.1.1.7 Mastering the language**

Mastering the German language is a criterion for succeeding in studies according to the respondents. Or if a BAMSA has the opportunity to study in another language e.g. English, or French that he is good in. They said it contributes to success. All the respondents mentioned German language as a challenge to studying in Austria. Two participants had also to take Latin as a condition to study in their field. Some indicated to have had the chance writing some of their term papers in English. Some of the text books written in English were for them an added advantage. Here are some of my respondents' experiences.

The language barrier was a big challenge to me. I knew that it is German language they use here. I thought I will cope after six months but I found out it was very, very difficult for one to grasp and to speak the language and understand the language

fluently. I ended up spending two years learning the language before I started to study. I found out that though I learned the language for two years, I was having problems initially [with my studies]. That took me back a little. I felt being delayed learning the language. I thought of going to London or another place to continue my studies but I was persuaded by my sister to pursue my studies in Austria (BAMSA-3).

The only challenge was to do Latin. They insisted that I should do Latin for my studies. It was a big challenge to me because I didn't have any basic in Latin. It was difficult (BAMSA-4).

I started with the German course. I had advantage learning German because I started learning it in Africa. I learned German four years in Africa. I came here; I did it only one semester, I went for the exam and was successful. I went direct to the university. But if you go to the university, you will see another reality. The German you learnt is not enough to allow you to understand many things. As I saw that, I wanted to change. Not that the first course was very difficult but German; German is very difficult for someone who wants to study here. Maybe in Mathematic it will be easy but in literature it is very difficult to study in another language. I had only problem of the language. You see sometimes at the university, the professors, they don't speak German, they speak dialect. That is a very, very big problem. So we don't have to learn German only; we have to learn the dialect (BAMSA-7).

#### **6.1.1.8 Considerable study period**

Length of study, how fast or slow a person is in his studies - only two of the participants considered it as necessary. The respondents did not describe it in the institutionalized sense discussed by Tinto (1975). There he claims that “two-year colleges have higher dropout rates than four-year colleges do” (p. 112). The respondents spoke of it rather in the sense that it should be a personal effort to complete the study within the institutionalized time frame. The respondents wished for not too long period of study. However, according to them, their circumstances do not allow them to be fast in completing their studies.

BAMSA's desire for shorter study period is quite obvious, since my respondents are of age 25 and higher at the beginning of their studies so they will stand better chance to succeed if the study period is short. There is a correlation between the age and the dropout rate from tertiary education (Kolland, 2002:33). If one begins tertiary education after 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, he or she is already in an employment age and could have a steady relationship, or children. All these factors increase the risk of dropping out of studies.

Secondly, the old study system in Austria has an average of eleven semesters for the undergraduates. Eight of the respondents studied in the old system. Such a long study period is also the case in Germany. Hence, Lewin, 1999 (cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999:20), gave “study lasts too long” as one of the reasons for dropping out of university.

My respondents spoke of it this way:

It depends on what one has in mind and on their age when coming out of African continent. It is good if one does it when he is younger. But if one is old, their chances are limited. They should do the right thing at the right time. The longer you stay the more money you spend. It is better you do it at that stipulated semester that was given. Make good use of your time (BAMSA-10).

I am not satisfied because if I am in a French speaking country maybe I would have finished my Doctorate degree but now I stay here for almost nine years and I am fighting to have only Masters. Can you see the difference? It is not because of the willpower but the difficulties we face here. They do not permit us to go quickly in the studies (BAMSA-7).

In the university, everything was okay, apart from the fact that, I wasted a lot of time in the first exams to do a subject. You have to pass this course before you go into the next level. The exam was not difficult but I am not passing it. You can't imagine. I started 1978 and that [exam] was at the beginning of the studies but I didn't do it till 1983. Without passing it you are going nowhere. That was in the old system now it is different (BAMSA-8).

### *6.1.2 Psychological resources*

#### **6.1.2.1 Intention to study**

Another important factor is the intention to study. The respondents claimed they had studying as a part of their “abroad agenda”. One of them said he developed the interest to study here in Austria. Some of them said they have got the dream to be graduates or purposefully came to Austria to study. Intentionality and forethought are aspects of Bandura's human agency theories which serve as a motivational factor. A future action is planned to be performed (Bandura, 2001:6ff; Covington, 2000). I asked my respondents if (a) to be a graduate was their life dream; and (b) if to study abroad was their wish from outset of their emigration plan. They answered this:

Yes I always wanted to be a graduate. I want to study overseas; I want to study overseas (laughed...). Somehow yes but I had always dreamt to be a graduate. To go to university and study and come out like others. I have not finished studies. I only finished stage one, I only have one certificate. I am looking for the next certificate (the doctorate degree); if I finish it, I will know that I have finished studies here. My intention is to go and spend one year in Oxford, before going back to Africa (BAMSA-1).

Respondent two is the only respondent among the BAMSA who developed the interest to study here in Austria. While answering my question: If studying was his motive for emigration; he said:

Basically, it was not the motive. But when I came here looking at the situation of things, I became interested in getting myself better than I was before I came. So that when I go back home I will have something better than the people back at home. But to study was not the motive why I came (BAMSA-2).

Others, to study was their number one agenda or at the top of their priority list before they left their home. Here are some responses:

As I am leaving Africa, of course I left because of war but in my mind I said, when I land somewhere safely, I must continue my education. I know I need to be working but I have it in mind to continue my education (BAMSA-5).

Ordinarily, without education, I wouldn't have found myself here. That is my main purpose of coming here. Yes, to be a graduate was a dream which has come true but my target is to... I equally promise myself that I will have my Doctorate before my 33 (BAMSA-10).

The respondents told me about some BAMSAs whose intention was not actually to study. They came to the university to wait for other opportunities like job or legalization of their residence permit. Such students dashed out of studies once the door opened for them. It is nothing particular for only the BAMSAs. Kolland (2000) discussed “*unechte Studienabbruch*” students who weren’t serious students right at the outset (p.24).

#### **6.1.2.2 The value of education**

Relative functionalism was used in the literature to indicate the way individuals perceive the function/value of education in comparison to other non-educational pursuits (Harris/Halpin, 2002:81). The respondents described this factor as the desire for the benefits that high education brings e.g. knowledge, job opportunities, prestige and a higher income.

When less value is placed on degree, students may want to drop out if they get a favourable offer of employment. In researches about possible reasons for dropping out from university, (Lewin, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al, 1999:20, 23), a good job opportunity even without exams and a good offer of appointment were reasons for students to drop out. This is not the case when education is priced. Zalaquett, (2005) reported about the Latina/o Students who succeeded in their studies. All the interviewed Latina/o “students (100%) believed that it is very important to study hard and earn competitive grades in school. Furthermore, students view education as the key to a better future” (p.41).

In the same manner, one could deduce from the responses that the respondents placed great deal of value in education. They were desperate about education. Hence, despite their social situation and possible other emigration reasons, e.g. to get money and help relatives back home which they gave as one of their responsibilities, they turned down some job offers that may ruin their studies. Only one of the respondents did not mention this factor as his motivation.

The questions are: What their motivation was; what made them to go into university studies? Here are some responses:

I believe the greatest factor for success is to know why you are studying and the willingness. There are those who may have the financial possibility but they are not successful. If one knows why he must study ... I loved literature and wanted where I will have more to do with Africa and more insight in the world. Roman language - French and Spanish, I wanted to engage myself with French speakers and all about development of Africa (BAMSA-5)

As I came here I saw the study as something I must do in order to be happy in my life. I saw it to be a necessity. Here I see the need to study. In Africa I did not see the need because, I could get a work that I want; but here I wanted to work and they ask me what have I studied. I don't want to be a cleaner all my life or help worker. I then thought I must study. I must go to university. I want to know more. I want to know why I am here, I want to know why have I left my country; why are there war in my country? I want to understand things. My study in Austria is helpful to me because it makes me to see or to interpret the world in a different way. I am very grateful that I have the opportunity to study. I wanted to learn. Every day, I wanted to know new things. This expectation is fulfilled (BAMSA-5).

There is something they do here like "Berufsschule" - apprentice school. If you don't want to go to university you go to Apprentice school. Apprentice school is micro-



scopic but university education is macroscopic. If you do apprentice school, you will not have any transcript to present when you go home. I want something that will be of future relevance to me; that is why I decided to choose university education (BAMSA-10).

I have studied throughout my whole life. I was just curious. I want to know people. I studied Criminology. To know the people, that was my main interest. Philosophy, psychology, beliefs - Christian, Moslem; the question about the future [were my motivations to study]. I think it was curiosity. I wanted to get some kind of knowledge. I want to see the other side of things. Everything I met was a challenge to me and I wanted to go higher. I want to have the feeling that I did it (BAMSA-4).

Because of having a better life. To live well; and also my parents always advised me to study. I always had it in my mind that when I study, I will make it. I have recommended studying in Austria to many people, most especially to members of my own family. Education is a key; it is power (BAMSA-11).

### **6.1.2.3 Locus of control**

I will define locus of control thus. Individuals believe that their efforts will be successful; they are making effort in being proactive in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation and self-discipline. Individuals feel in control of their successes or failures (internal locus of control). Means-ends beliefs and Agency beliefs described by Skinner et al., (1998) are applicable to success in studies. Means-ends beliefs relate the expectation that particular causes can produce certain outcomes. Agency beliefs are the expectations that one has access to the means needed to produce various outcomes (ibidem). Individuals could exploit the means available to achieve their desired outcome. Harris/Halpin (2002) maintains that individuals who have a high degree of the internal locus of control variables are more likely to pursue and complete a college degree (p.80). In Kolland (2002), successful students gave thus: I found a way of overcoming my learning problems. I found a job that agreed with my studying time. Others gave: I sought for psychological counseling (p.65). These indicate a conscious effort to find solution to impending hindrances in their studies.

The respondents claimed that, making efforts and seeking solutions are some of the factors that made them to succeed in their studies. Here are some of their comments.

I think one of the most important things is to make sure that you encourage yourself. Encouraging yourself means having in mind that with or without you I can live. Because if you say okay, or if you retire, then you have already lost; try and try, try

and try. If you say you want to study, study. If it didn't work then you know, it didn't work. Not "*halbherzig*" [halfhearted]. Make sure you have given your best. If it didn't work, you know you have tried your best. You don't say you have tried your best when you have not applied your best (BAMSA-1).

Respondent three gave a practical example how being active in seeking information and making efforts led to securing his admission into FH Wiener Neustadt. He stated thus:

When I applied for the admission, the university asked me to authenticate my results. That was a problem. It took me some months before I was able to see someone who helped me to address the problem. I used the same result at the WU, they accepted it without authentication. Vienna University gave me admission without asking for authentication. But the FH Wiener Neustadt said I must authenticate it. I went back to WU and asked why they accepted me without authentication. They gave me a couple of law that governs the asylum. That with my asylum I am not required to authenticate my results. I went back to the FH Wiener Neustadt and they said they are not governed by the same law; that their own law is different. A woman linked me up with one institute of science and research, a man there wrote a recommendation letter and they now accept the results without the authentication (BAMSA-3).

After noting that his greatest mistake was not to have turned to other Black Africans for more information, respondent seven advised thus:

A black African student who comes here to study should first of all look for an African who did the same studies before. If you find someone who gives you information about the course you want to do, maybe you can win two to three years. If they are open to you and give you advice, follow it. If you don't do what they say, you will see. You will lose your time; but if you follow their advice, you will finish quickly (BAMSA-7).

#### **6.1.2.4 Self-efficacy**

This factor is significant in Harris/Halpin (2002): Development and Validation of the Factors Influencing the Pursuit of Higher Education Questionnaire. For the respondents, they spoke of it in the form of high expectations, desire and willpower to achieve an academic title, self-confidence, optimism, determination, being focused and goal oriented. Self-efficacy originates from developmental and educational psychology. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as individuals' confidence in their ability to organize and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task. "Bandura's

self-efficacy theory focuses on expectancies for success” (Eccles, 2002: 111). He proposed that “individuals’ efficacy expectations are the major determinant of goal setting, activity choice, willingness to expend effort, and persistence (ibidem). Harris/Halpin (2002) said that, this trait has been found to be predictive of behaviours such as academic performance, academic persistence, achievement motivation, and the number of career options that a person considers (Harris/Halpin, 2002:80).

Self-efficacy was one of the qualities that lacked among the dropouts in Kolland, (2002). For instance, self-efficacy would have been the antidote to issues like: I did not work hard in my studies; I feel continually estranged from the university; the study was too theoretical for me etc. which the dropouts gave as their reasons for dropping out (Kolland, 2002:55).

Studying was to the BAMSA not just rites of passage. Some of them claimed to have a desire - the desire to be better than they were at home, to make a change in the society or in their lives. The desire to obtain European certificate, to acquire knowledge were part of their responses. This desire, according to them, is what they focus on; they have the desire to achieve it. Respondents 2, 6 and 12 captured their thoughts in the following words:

I came here looking at the situation of things; I became interested in getting myself better than I was before I came. So that when I go back home I will have something better than the people back at home. The strategy one has to apply is to focus on the direction that you are going. If I have looked at all these distractions, they would have weighed me down. But I just have to have a focus aiming at the target what I am going to achieve at the end. That was just the strategy (BAMSA-2).

I am somehow proud of myself. My aim was to show another picture about Africa. You see, here they are showing only bad pictures about Africa. They show hunger, war and all sorts of things. I wanted to show another picture about Africa and I will fulfill this aim. After, I will go back to Africa and will open a broadcasting company. There, I will also make another picture of Africa and come to sell it here. ... My mother’s relatives don’t want me to study. They can give me money for disco and for stupid things but not for my studies. That is not true support. I want to show that without their support, I could be somebody (BAMSA-6).

The main thing is to have a focus and to remain focused. You know that there are challenges but if you remain focused, somehow you can get on. It is not only immigrants. I could remember in the hostel, we were staying with a young Austrian. The

parents were rich, they have a restaurant. Each time they will bring things to this lady but she is the type that used to have everything done for her. So the stress of staying alone and doing everything for herself was too much for her. She has to quit after six months. But look at us we have to go and work in holidays and still come back to start from where we stopped. Of course you have time plan but sometimes it cannot work. As I told you the stipulated semester for my studies was nine but the best the best students finish it at thirteen. Those of us spent sixteen semesters. The main thing is to remain focused, with the thought that nothing will bring me out of the circle until you finish (BAMSA-12).

#### 6.1.2.5 Less Leisure

Leisure was mentioned by the respondents as distractions. They said it could be in the form of women, parties, going out. According to the respondents, *leisure* is seen as a negative factor which any BAMSA should control in order to be successful in studies. The responses to my question: ‘what distraction do you have to overcome during your studies?’ are as follows:

Women, women can distract you and take you away from studies. Money and enjoyment in high modus are other distractions. I lost three girlfriends. Each in turn asked me to choose between them, my studies, my hobby in ORF and parties. I have two persons now that are studying in the Technical University. I tell them, the first problem here are women. Many Africans come here and they believe they are strong. They are hooked up with two to three women. If you are a student, that will not work. You must choose between women and your studies.

I had that experience and it was terrible. If you have more than one girlfriend, when you finish with lectures you go to the one, the others will be phoning you. Some turn off their handy, they don't know whether to turn it on again or not because maybe the other one has sent a message. I had three girlfriends. Each of them has her own ringing tone; when I am with one I blocked the others. That was catastrophic. Just think a student playing such tricks in his head and with his life. You don't think of your studies but how you will navigate through women. It was chaos.

Another problem is going to parties and discos. In Africa you have your parents that control you; here you are your own guide. You must take right decisions. If you are stupid, you will be going out daily and you can no more study (BAMSA-6).

Respondent four and twelve refused to be distracted.

I had an objective to finish my studies. Yes at the free time I go to disco. I chase women. They chase me. But I have time for my studies and nothing could distract me from it. My objective was to finish. I had a girlfriend that time but I always tell

her, look I am not here for joke, when she talk about marriage or these sorts of things. I have an objective (BAMSA-4).

Distraction depends on the type of people you are moving with. There are people that every Saturday they will go to disco and Sundays they will go to wine drinking areas. Maybe you come into those who are not students, those that have another agenda. Studying here does not require that every evening you are on the way going about. Go and get your seat in the library and get out your books and read (BAMSA-12).

#### **6.1.2.6 Emotional Control**

Some of the respondents claimed that they encountered several provocations. Some said there would be need to humble oneself in order to learn and benefit from other students. Others pointed at difficulties and temptations which could set in. Therefore control over pride, anger, crime according to the some BAMSAs interviewed is necessary to ensure successful completion of your studies. Tinto (1975:92) wrote about forced withdrawal (dismissal) from college, which may arise from the breaking of established rules concerning proper social and academic behaviour (e.g., student strikes, stealing exams, etc.). Four participants commented on this factor. They maintained that it forms a big determinant for their success in Austrian institution of higher learning. Here are the comments.

You must get yourself emotionally under control; emotionally under control because, you will be provoked times without numbers and you have to have endurance. Try to hold your emotions. You hold your emotions because immediately you quarrel with one of the professors; you can forget the whole thing. And always you must know that the professors are superior. Don't bring yourself on negative eyes before the professor. Don't be notorious. Try to be submissive. And there are certain things they will tell you, don't argue too much. Just do it the way he or she wants it to be and let it be. Without that it is very difficult. Getting yourself emotionally under control is difficult for us Africans. But it is very helpful (BAMSA-1).

Respondents two and three took provocative feelings low. They said:

In school you feel rejected when you ask somebody that you know and he knows something better than you, he ignores you, he doesn't even show concern. You are busy you could not even do your homework, you want someone to put you through but no one will. You feel rejected when you need their help and no one is there to help. Well you cannot do otherwise. You just have to accept it like that. You can't beat them or do anything to them. Some time you appeal to some they will listen to

you. But it is ... particularly in a group work, in a presentation, you join a group some people will leave that group. Immediately they find out that your name is in that group, you see them leaving to join other group just because you are there (BAMSA-2).

How was the relationship between you and others students and your professors?

The relationship is good. I even have some of the professors as friends in the face book. There were also some who discriminate me maybe because I am black. Some do it indirectly. There were few that do it to my face. I was a kind of shocked that somebody can be so bold showing racial tendency. But I kept it low. I didn't try to show that I am a human being or something like that. I just took it that way (BAMSA-3).

In a few words respondent No. four told me how he failed in the trap of pride and scared others away:

"I was too proud and some get scared from me because I challenged them. Do not be too emotional, this is one of our mistakes we do often. We just slam the door" (BAMSA-4).

## **6.2. Social factors (Institutionalized factors and Social capital)**

### *6.2.1 Institutionalized Factors*

#### **6.2.1.1 Affirmative actions**

This category represents the respondents' experience with policies on admission, school fees, and general administrative protocols. In the literature reviewed in this paper this factor was described as affirmative actions for the less privileged students (Davis, 2002; O'Connor 2002). The respondents shared with me their experience of this factor.

BAMSA-12 gave me his story of when he began to study easily in Austria with ordinary level certificate. The demand before was an advanced certificate. He said thus:

On the issue of admission I must make a remark. There was a time our people were coming with advanced papers. If you come that time they will say you have to go and get advanced papers. We were lucky that the vice chancellor of University of Vienna at that time used to be a Guest professor in the University of Ibadan. And our people were really doing well. Immediately they had admission, very quickly

they will finish the language course and the preliminary studies. They will go to the professor and say they have finished. So he was impressed and the door was opened for us that time. Every two months we were going for graduation ceremony (BAMSA-12).

From the responses, it seems as a BAMSA could be discouraged or completely blocked out without this factor. The following respondents had some institutional barriers that could have blocked them out or cause them to drop out.

When I applied for the admission, the university asked me to authenticate my results. That was a problem. It took me some months before I was able to see someone who helped me to address the problem (BAMSA-2).

I know one Senegalese who wanted to go to Technical University but he did not succeed in the admission, he just gave up. Just because you are black they will ask you for this paper and that paper, that is a barrier. You go there, they just see you are black, they tell you that you have to go there and there. Sometimes they give you false information (BAMSA-4).

The first course was difficult for me, I wanted to change my course but they refused. The law here is that if you are a foreign student, you continue with the course you started with until after five years; or if you are married to an Austrian they can allow you to change but if not, you must continue with the course you came to study until after five years<sup>29</sup>. That is why I stayed for five years before I applied for this language studies. ... You know you have to present results for your student visa to be renewed. That is the problem I had with the first course, because of the language. I have to go to another school; I stayed there two years, only to have results to renew my visa (BAMSA-7).

#### **6.2.1.2 Stable resident permit**

Some of the respondents said that if ones' residential permit is unstable, there could be expulsion letters coming from the immigration police. Fighting against expulsion letters from Austrian immigrations authorities according to them is energy consuming. Respondent three said that it could rob a student his/her concentration. Some of them stated that the asylum situation and renewing of student visa are stressful and could become an impossible task. They maintained that if a BAMSA has a stable resident per-

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<sup>29</sup> Claims like this could be substantiated in future studies. In this study I did not investigate any claim that appeared strange to me.

mit, it is a positive factor which contributes to success. Here are some of their comments on this factor:

Then this issue of not having resident permit is a distraction. You will be receiving some kind of threatening letters from the asylum office. This is another powerful distraction. When you receive such letter, for two to three days you won't get yourself back. You will be thinking of so many things without solution. These are the things I can say were the distractions (BAMSA-2).

I know those who dropped out because of other problems entirely. These people did not come as students. They came as visitors, they took asylum and wanted to study, and then they had problem with the resident permit. They have to go back (BAMSA-3).

There are those I know they have resident permit problem. They are discouraged. To study they feel is a double load on them (BAMSA-5).

As I could not provide a result to extend my visa, I left for London. I still have three months in my visa. I went to London and the story was the same. In fact they said I should go back to Africa and come again as a student. That was not possible for me. I came back to Austria. In between, I won a competition and left for the training. When I came back, I collected everything I have done in Austria, all documentations. I made a big file of my documents; all what I did, everywhere I appeared in the newspapers and all what not. With these things I applied for citizenship. It was a miracle, they gave me the citizenship. That is how I could again stay in Austria and study. There are other students I knew who left Austria because of problems with extension of their visa. Some went to seek for asylum but I don't know how that works; going from one status to another much more difficult status (BAMSA-6).

### **6.2.1.3 Financial stability**

The factor financial stability applies when a respondent mentions financial difficulties, financial aids, and financial stability. It is a factor that was mentioned by all the respondents as a key issue for succeeding in studies in Austria. Financing their studies has been a significant reason for dropping out from tertiary education, even for the native students (Lewin, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al, 1999:25; Kolland, 2002:55). It is always duties like working and family responsibilities that are threats to success in studies. Unlike in Wittenberg/Rothe, (1999) where students gave other reasons for working – just to earn their own money, to accomplish something, or as a practice or preparation for the future employment (cited in Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:125). The respondents said they worked just to have means of survival and some included the



support of their relatives. Only one of the respondents had a scholarship from home. Despite the fact that the BAMSA were exempted from paying fees in Austrian public universities (only one of them paid school fees for his master studies); the respondents view money for survival on daily basis as a problem. Some of them received once or twice financial help from some organizations. Only one of the respondents was financially stable throughout his studies. Others claimed to have lived from hand to mouth. Here are their stories:

The only problem was the finance, to pay my bills. Not only what you are going to eat, you pay for your accommodation, you pay for your health insurance, and you pay for transport. There is a lot to pay for. All these things throw me off balance. If you are financially stable, you are not going to be distracted, you will make it. I did receive financial help from some organizations, like Afro-Asian Institute, although it was difficult. Initially, I applied for scholarship but I was disqualified. They said after my German course, later I tried again it all failed. But if I have financial problem I do go to them, and they help me but, it is difficult. I have to present my results, my statement of account and all these things. I do receive help mostly from the Evangelic Church in "XY" [address withheld during transcription]. They have been nice to me; honestly, they have been nice to me. They have done more than enough. There was a time they helped me to pay deposit, when I got a flat. They paid the 500Euros (BAMSA-9).

I had a lot of challenges, one financially, two, the ... When I saw that my field study will be, I foresee that finance will be a big problem. I started working towards it beforehand. Make sure you have a sufficient fund before you even start, because nobody will be able to help you financially here. Only Ute Bock, Ute Bock organization helped me two times to pay my school fees; apart from that, no individual, no one (BAMSA-10).

Students like me, most obstacles we have are financial. Unlike in other countries, students are not allowed to work here. So, financing your studies was a challenge. It was not common at that time for people of colour to be given a scholarship. The only hindrance I knew about was finance. I didn't have so much financial backing. So I knew that could form a hindrance; and also having to support my family financially. I quite remember twice I was given a bit of help by the Austrian Hochschülerschaft [High school Organization]. It wasn't much, about 400 or 500 Euro; I received it two or three times (BAMSA-11).

#### 6.2.1.4 The absence of glass ceiling effect:

The glass ceiling effect sets in when a person perceives the opportunities for success in a particular job or jobs to be blocked or if there is a lack of employment opportunities (Harris/Halpin, 2002). For Black Africans, glass ceiling effect could also set in when their chances of staying in Austria are limited. Respondent five spoke of some of his friends:

There are those who are studying but later say it does not make sense. They saw other graduates who are driving taxi and they gave up. I thought that after my studies, I will get a job but I realize now that it is an illusion (BAMSA-5).

Glass ceiling effect produces a sense of hopelessness and despair among certain minority groups when it comes to competing for jobs traditionally held by majority population. Harris/Halpin, (2002) concluded that “This concept may also be a factor that inhibits some minorities from pursuing higher education” (p. 81). However, this effect is not limited to minority. Kolland, (2002:55) and Lewin (1999) noted that bad employment chances is one of causes of dropping out (Lewin 1999, cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999: 20).

Some of my respondents said they experienced the glass ceiling effect in Austria but it did not have strong effect on them; hence they are successful in their studies; obviously it did not affect them badly as to derail them from their studies. According to some of them, they were optimistic that they will get a job when they finish. Those who did not perceive any chance of getting job in Austria believed in succeeding elsewhere.

They shared their experiences with me when I tried to find out if they see any chance of getting employed after their studies. Here are their thoughts:

There was no chance. I didn't perceive any chance. In this country, they have to consider their citizens first. Unlike we Blacks, we are not highly welcomed here - in this country. The only job one can have as long as you finish, that's how I saw it. Even if you have been a graduate at home, no matter your level, you are not guaranteed to do all these high class jobs. You can only do restaurant jobs, washing plates, or cleaning the streets although you are a graduate. So I saw all these things.... Even if the opportunity is not here for me to work, I have the hope I can work elsewhere, it must not be in Austria. My aim is to get this European certificate. That will give me honour anywhere I am going (BAMSA-9).

Knowledge is everywhere helpful. Even if you don't use it here, we can use it in Africa. Even in [my country], I never think that if I finish I will get a job. I want to create my own job (BAMSA-7).

Although people used to discourage me that when I will finish I will not have a job, but I always think positive that I will get a job. Now, anyway, my aim is not just to get a job but to finish and have my PhD. Yes, that is why I am so happy about my second course. It really fills my hope and the project which I intend to do. It was when I came here that I discovered this grain and that it is not much grown in Africa. I was thinking of making it possible in our country. That is what I am writing about in my PhD, so that it can grow. There is so much sun, and I am hoping that I can dedicate the rest of my life to working on that. But I hope that after my studies I will go back to Africa and work on my project (BAMSA-11).

At the beginning of the studies I thought I have chances but along the line, people who did the same course before me had no chance. I knew it is going to be difficult but I did not give up. ... I thought I had a chance but it couldn't just work out the way I thought. The job situation here is terrible. If you want to get a job here as a graduate, degree holder or as a master's degree holder; it is like a camel passing through the eyes of a needle. More especially if you are a foreigner and a Black African. The only place you can find your way is if you are connected to the institutions like United Nations, OPEC and so on. In those places it is easier but if you are connected with an insider. [If it is] based on your qualification alone, it is difficult (BAMSA-10).

One thinks of a job, but it is based on God and based on luck because, it is not the best that get a job. One cannot be fully sure that he will get a job. But the motive is that if I finish I will get a job (BAMSA-2).

The lack of the glass ceiling effect could be explained by their having Africa in mind. To all the respondents, the sky is their limit in Africa and they all hope to return sooner or later to Africa. Second explanation could be the effort to be integrated in Austrian society. They believed that studying will give them better opportunity in Austria. One of them told me, he does not want to be unskilled immigrant; another said he doesn't want to be limited to certain kinds of jobs only.

#### **6.2.1.5 Less Segregation**

Everyday racism, legal hindrances for foreigners in the area of job opportunities, segregation in class rooms and in team works were the issues the respondents pointed out. Segregation was found to be one of the causes of Black and White academic achieve-

ment gap in the USA (Ansalone, 2009:45). All the respondents had something to say about segregation either in the class room or in Austrian society. According to them, segregation is a threat to successful completion of graduate studies in Austria. The following statements are part of their stories:

You know in this university, this is a white man country. Our colour can be of advantage and disadvantage. Some will love you, some will hate you. Some of them are very good. Some you can interact with them. Some of them don't want you. Some of them tell you that and some of them just show it to you (BAMSA-1).

Then another challenge also is racism. Racism in schools, racism at universities - the way you are treated by fellow students, teachers, professors, you may feel ... As an African, it is very discouraging. You can easily give up because of the way you are being treated (BAMSA-11).

In a lecture the first time, they said we have to make a group. All the students quickly formed their groups. No one came to me. If I go to this group, they will say, they are already complete. All the groups, no group wanted me in their group. The professor now takes it upon herself to pick people to form the groups and tells them, they must build a group with this man (BAMSA-7).

When I came here, I could remember in the chemistry class where I sat, four seats were empty from my left and right. No one sat with me. In one of the lectures the professor started to talk about why some people are black and have different eye colours. I felt so bad (BAMSA-12).

I expected discrimination because of colour and a kind of prejudice. I expected that I might be marginalized but in the course of my study I realized that it was not really the case. They treated everybody as students. The marginalization was also there but from the students not from the professors. It is from the students I experienced marginalization (BAMSA-3).

### **Marginalization in employment**

Though as student, we are allowed to work maybe three months during the summer or working part time during the semester but if someone gets a job then he goes for the working permit. It is really difficult because of the laws here against foreigners. It happened to me so I will say seeking for working permit here is also a big challenge (BAMSA-3).

I felt marginalized. It happened to me when I got a job in a company and I looked for a working permit to do the job but the employment office refused. The reason they gave me was that this job was for the Austrians. Citizens have the first of choice; only if there is no Austrian who can do that job, then it can be given to me. I

waited a month and went back again they said NO; that this job is not for foreigners. That I should keep waiting. I waited and the three months I supposed to do this job was gone and I was like ... I won't call it rejected but I will say I was marginalized because I am a foreigner (BAMSA-3).

It is racism. One day I got a job. Everything was online. The day I suppose to start the work I went there and the receptionist asked me: are you this man, I said yes, she asked me again, are you Austrian. I said: in the advert and throughout the arrangements, they did not say that the person must be an Austrian. They said I should go back they will call me; they never called me (BAMSA-7).

Only respondent 8 studied with a different view.

Secondly you don't have to study with a prejudice, thinking that anything happens to you because you are black for instance. If you are like that, it will not allow you to make efforts in order to be successful. Don't think anybody is a racist. Concentrate on your studies and eventually, you will make it (BAMSA-8).

#### **6.2.1.6 Good teacher-student interaction**

The respondents said that teacher-student relationship could boost or mare the studying effort of a student. Good teacher-student relationship is one of the factors that lead to success in studies (Kolland, 2002:72). Teachers can be instrumental in encouraging youth to pursue a higher education (Raffini, 1993). Lack of attention by professors was named as one of the reasons that cause dropping out (Lewin, 1999, cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al, 1999:32). The respondents spoke about good or bad experiences with the professors. A good interaction with the professors is presented by the respondents as one of the criteria for a successful completion of university studies in Austria. Even if there is no interaction at all, they warned, there should not be a conflict with the professors.

Some of them are very good. Some you can interact with them. Some of them don't want you. Some of them tell you to your face and some of them just show it to you. For instance, Professor AB [name withheld during transcription] doesn't like me. He doesn't like me; he did not tell me. I know this and he knows it. Immediately you quarrel with one of the professors you can forget the whole thing. And always you must know that the professors are superior. In the class, if you know something and the professor is making mistake, don't put it in a way to show that he makes a mistake. If you do that, they will all laugh but at the end you will be left alone. (Laughing...) they can be very wicked with pen. They can keep you here for

years; unless you go out without certificate. So don't try to run faster than your shadow, to make the professor look stupid. If you know it, you know it. And when the exam comes, you write it (BAMSA-1).

My professors, we relate well. If I have problems, I do go to the professors, they explain it to me. If I am not clarified in the lecture, I am the type that I don't hide my feelings. I say what is in my mind. So I do go to professor if I have problems (BAMSA-9).

The experience with the professors was okay, you will see some that you don't know whether they are sympathetic or pathetic but all the same. There was this experience that a Nigerian who was studying before me had - each time he finish his exams, the professor will demand for it to remark it, and ask him where he learnt chemistry. At a point he became frustrated and left to study something else. I had a professor who always come to exam hall and said that I am very good, that I will get very good from him even before we started writing. Each time he sees me in the train he will come and sit with me. There is also one that, whatever you do, he will tell you, this is not how to do it. There are those who have gotten an exposure with foreigners, maybe they have gone out and lived somewhere but there are some who are not exposed. I could remember in one of the exams, the professor came in and said, if you are not ready for the exam, you go and register for the re-sit by the secretary. The exam has not yet started. Of course I later fail the exam. And at the resit he told me if I am not prepared, I could go for a resit (BAMSA-12).

#### **6.2.1.7 Short Distance**

Distance to the school presents also a challenge. A respondent mentioned distance as a challenge which he faced. He lives in Vienna and has to travel 45minutes or 1 hour in order to attend lectures in Wiener Neustadt. In a wide representative research, this factor could play a big role. One may for one reason or other have to study in a faraway city. Otherwise he may forfeit studying.

I also had a problem with the distance. Travelling from Vienna to Wiener Neustadt was a big challenge to me. I spent 45minutes to one hour in the train going and the time coming back. That is not easy (BAMSA-2).

#### **6.2.1.8 Good facilities/infrastructure**

According to the respondents, facilities/infrastructure, equipment in the school, and good study atmosphere contributes to success. Tinto (1975:113) noted that the quality of the college has also been found to influence persistence in studying. In most of the re-

searches bad studying conditions were ranged among reasons for dropping out (Liwen, 1999; Wittenberg/ Rothe 1999: cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al., 1999:30, 33,113ff).

The respondents see the studying condition as favourable. Of course, they compare the studying conditions in Austria to these of Africa. Three respondents see Austria compared to Africa as a good place to study for Black Africans. And the certificate acquired here is much worth in Africa and more valued than these acquired from universities in Africa.

We had equipment. Students could take them home and bring them back. Other students cluster and see them only in the school, I always take them home. Sometimes I sleep with camera on my bed. I want to know everything about it. That is wonderful here in Austria to study. In Africa you can only hear about the equipment or see them in pictures but here you can touch them. That was my strength. If I can touch anything, I need not to read much about it. I will turn it upside down and see how it works. (BAMSA-6)

The advantage to study here is that you have your peace. You have all equipment. I urge every African to study here. You have everything here. You have every advantage to finish your studies here than anywhere in Africa (BAMSA-6).

There is a difference between the education here and the one back at home. It has put me in the position to have access to some modern facilities coming up every day now (BAMSA-2).

The system here is challenging but the atmosphere is conducive. Nobody complains of electricity unlike where we came from (BAMSA-10).

### 6.2.2 *Social capital*

#### 6.2.2.1 **Interacting with native students**

The respondents spoke of going to groups meetings, get-togethers and participating in team work in the school. Tinto (1973) proposed a significant relationship between integration and dropping out from the university – academic integration and social integration. Social integration occurs through informal peer group associations, extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and administrative personnel within the college (p.107). In the same sense, the respondents saw *interaction with other students* as a factor that contributes to success in study. To the respondents, the interaction should preferably be with native students. The language is the major reason for this preference.

Other foreign students may as well be battling with the language; so they claimed that, it makes little sense to move with people that, like the Black Africans, do not know the language. Here are some of the responses:

The strategy was that you study in a group. This is the only way you will be successful and the professor has a good response if you are hundred in a semester and the hundred passed. The strategy of group helps. If they give you a project, you will discuss it in groups. You will have the chances of asking questions and seeing passed question papers. That is why it is advisable to move with Austrian students. There are some of them who are really super good. There are those who may not even like to waste time with you because they feel you are not in the same understanding with them. But there are some that even after lectures they will ask you if you understand what was discussed. They will give you their notes and you will combine it with the ones you know and you will become better. There are those who are very good (BAMSA-12).

If you register for a course, you have to be there punctual and you have to show that you are good. This will enable you to move with good heads in the class. You know there are best heads. That is people that get 1's - the Austrians. This enables you to come into their midst. If you don't know anything you will not get such friends. I avoided moving with foreigners. We move together, we go to coffee together. From that time, I started being good. I started getting 1s like them. At initial time it was not like that. Just as I told you about moving with the best heads; move with the natives, they know what's up. That will bring you further (BAMSA-1).

#### **6.2.2.2 Relating with Austrians**

The respondents added that relating with Austrians increased their chances of succeeding in studies. They described this factor in the terms of social contacts, integration, interactions with natives, marriage to an Austrian. The respondents gave me the impression that there is a high correlation between success in studies in Austria and integration, or interaction with either native students or native speakers. This kind of interaction is not the same like the social integration as presented in Kolland, (2002) and Tinto, (1973:107). Theirs are in terms of curriculum and extra-curriculum activities among the students which they marked as a factor that helps one to succeed in studies. Equally significant to the respondents is relating with other Austrians in close relationships. It boosts their knowledge of German language and they obtain some financial/material support. Nevertheless, some of them who went into deeper relationship said they've had bad experiences that could make them to drop out.



I separated relating with Austrians and interacting with native students because of the further advantage seen in the latter. In the former you have more of social and economic support with certain danger that could be involved – danger of dropping out due to responsibilities that accompany deeper relationship<sup>30</sup>. In the latter, the advantage is purely academic (see Relating with native students above). Here is how the respondents commented on the idea of relating with Austrians, including deep relationship.

The language is a problem. We Africans make big mistake. We go to places where only those who speak our mother language are. That is not right. We are in a foreign country; we must speak with them in other to learn their language. We must have contact with other indigenous Austrians. That is important for our integration. If you are not integrated you have no chance of finishing your studies (BAMSA-6).

Commenting on his negative experience, respondent six stated thus:

I lived with my Austrian girlfriend because I loved her and there was the possibility that I may through her stay in Austria but due to my studies, work and my hobby – ORF, I could not have enough time for her. They will tell you to stay with them; they will give you the money you need. So you are left to choose. I choose study and work, they didn't understand me, and they quit the relationship. I lost three girl friends in this way (BAMSA-6).

When I came here, what I heard from my predecessors was that, a foreigner coming to survive here, without a woman you will not make it. As a student, you are not allowed to work (BAMSA-9).

One of the good things- which were not a challenge- was that I was so lucky to have a girlfriend who was so helpful during my studies, and who is also the mother of my two children. She is an Austrian lady but she is originally from the Philippines. She was so good and helpful, she helped me so much. And also with my girlfriend, although she was a helper, you know, with women it was also not so easy (BAMSA-11).

My dearest wife. She is really ... Without her, it could have been more, more, more difficult. My dearest wife helped me. She is an Austrian. ... Another one is that I will advise my African brothers that the knowledge we have in Africa is quite different from reality: that the white man do not lie, it is fake. So now when you are here with them, it is better, what they tell you, read in between the lines before you go into

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<sup>30</sup> Issues I discussed in Family influence, Family responsibility and finance.

agreement with them. Before you say yes to all these things always think. You know all coins have two sides. Otherwise you will get astray (BAMSA-1).

### 6.2.2.3 Less family responsibility

Family responsibility entails one having a wife and children to care for here in Austria or back home. Or one cares for relatives or parents here or back home. Family responsibility is one of the negative factors emphasized by the respondents. It could hinder success in studies. So having less of it, according to the most of them, contributes to a success in studies. "Obtaining family support may be problematic for first-generation college students" (Harris/Halpin, 2002:80). Terenzini, et al., (1994), reported in a study of first-generation college students, that family members began pressuring the students to become less active in school activities and more supportive of family (Terenzini, et al., 1994). Lewin, (1999) gave family responsibility as one of the significant reason for dropping out of university (cited in Schröder-Gronostay et al; 1999:22ff; Wittenberg/Rothe, 1999).

Nuclear family and extended family responsibility made the situation of the BAMSA a delicate one. Only three of the respondents said they must not care for anyone during their studies. Others claimed to have family both here in Austria and back home whom they must care for. Those who had this responsibility stated thus:

All the distractions like.. oh my God. It is not easy to be a father while studying. Most of the nights, we do not sleep. Children will cry from 2am to 6am. I had my second daughter in October and I started my program in the same October. It was really like a hell. Most times, I will be doing exams, no time to read, no time to sleep. Any one hour I will run to library, turn off my phones. It was not really easy (BAMSA-10).

I am married to an African woman; we do not have any help. My first child was born in 2005. Children born in this country receive financial help but in 2006 they said no, that they cannot help anymore the children of parents who are studying here. If you are studying here and you have a child with a foreigner, you should not expect financial help. Only if you have a job that could permit you to have help from the country. I am with my financial problem, my wife is here, and my two children are here. So it is very difficult for me to study quickly. ... It is like all Africans, if you are here, the whole village expects something from you. So if you have something you have to share (BAMSA-7).

I have three kids here and a wife; I am caring for them. ... In Africa, this is our way, too much extended family. Of course, sometimes it was too much, what can one do (BAMSA-10).

Normally in Africa, even when you are studying abroad they are not so bothered; you must (care for someone). I receive so many calls from family members and relatives; and even though I was not earning so much, I used to send money home to my family members; especially my brothers and sisters. But it became lighter when my sister came here and I didn't need to send so much anymore. [Another thing which] I don't really think it was a mistake, but actually it was a help to have a girlfriend, who is also Austrian. It was not really a mistake; I will not call it a mistake, but having a child was. Having a child when I was still having part time jobs, having a child when you are studying, it's not really advisable, it is more responsibility and it takes much time. It is better to complete your studies before making a family. It is difficult when you are going to school. So this thing is the only thing I think they (BAMSA) should avoid (BAMSA-11).

#### **6.2.2.4 Positive family influence:**

Some of the respondents said that their family members were supportive to them. Almost all the Latina/o students and other research subjects reported that the strong family support helped Latina/o succeed in high school and pursue a college education (Zalaquett, 2005:40). Family influence was found to be very influential in students' achievements (Ansalone, 2009:45).

For my respondents, family members (relatives or parents, not the respondent's wife and children) served as role models; some of them were supportive, financially and morally. For example, the respondents spoke of parents and relatives who were graduates themselves, formed a role model to them, investing in them and expecting their success. In the literature the influence could be partly negative or be entirely negative. Harris/Halpin, (2002:80) claimed that, family members pressurise the students to become less engaged in school activities but be more supportive of family events. Some of my respondents stated to have had stress from their family members, others had positive experiences. When I inquired about close relatives here in Austria, only two respondents (BAMSA-1 and BAMSA-2) gave me a negative response about their relatives.

I have relations but please remove that word close. We are not close. For instance the uncle I told you about. He has been dealing with me, taking my property at

home. When he comes here, He accuses me. This things, you are emotionally not settled (BAMSA-1).

My sister is here and some other family members were here but they did not play any role because nobody expected me to come here and start studying. To them it was strange. They expected me, when I come, to start work or making money. I changed the plan that was in their heart into studying and even gave less time to work (BAMSA-2).

Others spoke of family influence as a helpful factor and a motivation. They stated thus:

As I told you, I could not stop because, I will be the laughing stock to my brothers, if I say I could not study for any reason. They all studied here so I have no excuse. Of course they know about the financial difficulties and when they come they drop some money for me but one have to struggle (BAMSA-12).

I will say yes because all my family members are graduates. I intended to be one as well. I thought of going to London or another place to continue my studies but I was persuaded by my sister to pursue my studies in Austria. I will also say it helps if one has relation here in Austria. One can also succeed without relation but if one has relation here it really helps (BAMSA-3).

I thought I had more chance than others because my brother is here. I had everything until I left his house. The only problem was the climate at home. It was a difficult time for me but I had everything. The quarrel between my brother and the wife was disturbing me. I could not do well in the school until I left the home. My grades became much better (BAMSA-4).

The ingredients I brought from my family is already a motivation; everyone studied and mostly abroad. You know, you grow up in a family of academics, it takes you up automatically. So I have no option but to study. My senior brother did not even give me any alternative. Even when I was in the secondary school, my senior brother was writing to my principal to send my transcript to him abroad. He wanted all of us to study abroad. They did not even give us the opportunity to say that you want to go and trade or do something else. I could not stop because; I will be a laughing stock to my brothers, if I say I could not study for any reason. They all studied here so I have no excuse. The fear that you don't want to fail! When you remember that you can fail, and I don't want to fail myself, fail my friends, fail my family. When I remember this I will get up in the night and get my books and read. My expectation was to finish my studies and any time I remember it I will put on my light and start to read my books. You see, it was very sustaining. I don't want to fail, my family, my brothers, even my enemies. Who are you going to tell that you did

not make it? I know there were other opportunities like the catholic men and women, even the university or scholarship from them, but then you have to line up; maybe you get it, maybe not. So without my family, it would have been very difficult (BAMSA-12).

#### **6.2.2.5 Positive peer influence:**

Friends served as social buffers and helped to motivate, encourage and inspire. Conversely, non-academic friends served as distraction and mockers (Harris/Halpin, 2002). One of the respondents said he did not allow his friends to choose him. He did choose his friends himself (BAMSA-10). Harris/Halpin (2002), commenting on the effect of peer influence revealed that personal interactions with friends increased their general knowledge about college. Freshmen students entering high school - if they had high school friends, those friends helped ease the transition from high school to college. "Conversely, non-college friends served "as interpersonal anchors . . . hold[ing] the student in the network of friends and patterns of activities and interests of the precollege years" (p 81; Willet, 1989 and Terenzini, et al 1994)

As profitable as a social interaction may be, Tinto (1975) noted that excessive social interaction may lead to a low academic integration. This being said, it is a function of the types of persons with whom the interaction occurs (p. 108). Social interaction may lead to low academic integration. This may be true if the friendship ties are with persons who themselves are underachievers (Tinto, 1975:108). All the respondents saw peer influence to be a powerful contributor to success in studies. Read the following comments:

Distraction depends on the type of people you are moving with. But if you move with students, I could remember we have some Austrian students, I mean we go out for drinking. The following day you see everyone going to the lectures. People get distracted because of the type of company they keep (BAMSA-12).

People come to see how you are moving on but they mock you. They compare their condition with mine, I am still moving with student visa but they have gotten the citizenship. But there are some who admire. They encourage me. They say, since you have started this thing, you have to keep it up. Try and finish this thing. Don't give up. You will get it instead of quitting it at the middle. I have some who are now doing their Doctorate. The benefits I receive from them, like the presentations, this seminar stuff, and their system, how they did it. Sometime they helped me in how to use computer, how to use some software. The Blacks who I do meet

here, some of them who are already in the academic system, we do encourage each other (BAMSA-9).

Please don't move with idiots. It will not help you in your studies. Try to move with people that understand. In the class, students that understand what's-up are visible. I remember too well. I was in Schotentor. I dressed well. I was going to university. My taxi colleagues, one of them was telling me, why am I wasting my time? This thing you say you are going to the university, this is something for the Whites. Do you think that a Black man will ever? ... He said I have to go and take my car and queue-up. I told him: my friend, anyway, doesn't worry. If I deceive anyone I can only deceive myself. If I am deceiving myself, thank you for the advice (BAMSA-1).

The most Africans that see me going to school give me the feeling that I am a fool. Some of my friends tell me to forget this thing I am doing. Go and work and save money (BAMSA-5).

Your friends will give you their back when things are difficult. ... They will come to you and will tell you, remember all those taxi drivers they are PhD holders. Find something else you are going to do. Education is not for us here, if you finish, they are not going to employ you. They will cite examples of over ten people which you know they studied here and they are all taxi drivers. If you are not strong enough you will believe them and you will give up. ... Try to choose your friends, don't allow your friends to choose you (BAMSA-10).

#### **6.2.2.6 Role model**

There are Black Africans who studied in Austria. Some of the respondents said that such predecessors/senior students served as examples and as a motivation to them. Such individuals are not among their peer-groups or relatives. According to the respondents, they were just successful Black African academics who studied in Austria or Germany. Another group of role models are parents in Africa or relatives who are graduates. They form a role model and a motivation for the respondents. The following are some of the responses:

I know that at the end there will be challenges. But I said if my friends can face the challenges, why can't I (BAMSA-1)?

He must think there are those who made it. If others made it, why can't I. Others learnt this German and studied; why I can't. I will and I can (BAMSA-1).

I am a member of my country's Association, and was not the only student, I also had other friends who were studying; and I also knew of some other students who

had completed, so this one also gave me the motivation. In the sense that, if they could do it, why can I not also do it? And I also knew [black] students who studied in German and completed. This encouraged me; that if they could do it, then I too can do it (BAMSA-1).

#### **6.2.2.7 Contact with former Black African students/graduates**

Some of the respondents claimed that, contact with Black students/ Blacks that studied the same course will make you save some years. It will increase your chances of success. All but two of the respondents spoke of this factor as very necessary to ensure success in studies.

I have some who are now doing their Doctorate. The benefits I receive from them, like the presentations, this seminar stuff, and their system, how they did it. Some time they helped me how to use computer, how to use some software (BAMSA-9).

My first problem here was that I lacked contact with other Africans. It is important we have organization that could help people at the beginning of their studies; to explain things in a mixture of our language and German language. That they will understand, for example mathematics, physics and chemistry. There, we can encourage others (BAMSA-6).

The mistake I made was at the beginning I stayed alone. I did not open myself to other Black Africans who studied before me. We have the same reality- the same language problem, financial difficulties. I did not go to other black African students. That was a mistake (BAMSA-7).

#### **6.2.2.8 Solidarity**

The respondents said that the desire to promote the image of Africans in Austria or to be of help to the African community is a motivation for them. In the literature review by Zalaquett, (2005) this factor was described to be coming from the community in which the student belonged to (p.42). The community wanted their children to get higher in the society and they provided moral and financial support for them. To the respondents, the idea of solidarity comes from them. Some of them want or have in mind to help their community. They commented on this factor thus:

They [BAMSA] have to know that to study is a priority. They have to think about the people they left at home. They may know us, we may not know them, and they count on us that one day we will come home. [BAMSA] have to know that to study is a priority. No matter how bad our leaders are. We have to know how our people are suffering. We have a role to play. This should give us the sense and energy to

fight. No matter the difficulties, we have to fight. ... The whole village contributed to our education and then we came. This we should not forget. Though sometimes we are down, really down but think of those at home, they hope and are waiting for us. We should keep away from the easy way. We should try to be close to our community. We have to get the best of the trainings and then we have to go and help our people (BAMSA-4).

He must always think: I am an African. There are many who do not have the chance we have here. There are countries where only the rich can go to the university, or countries where there is war. They must think they will be more helpful to Africa when they study. Let us prove to this society that we are not just problem makers. Let us not allow the society to force us to be what we are not (BAMSA-5).

My motivation was right from when I was young. I wanted to be a freedom fighter - the mouth piece of the oppressed. I know I need education for this. [My expectations are to] Graduate one day, have a good job, take care of my family, become a good ambassador of my country here, go back some day, and become useful to my community, my state and my country as a whole with the knowledge I have acquired outside my country (BAMSA-10).



## Summary

### Category 1: Cultural capital

The BAMSA interviews proved to be successful due to their *cultural capital*. This category has eight criteria in it. In concrete terms, the respondents claimed to have a *good academic background*. This criterion has to do with the individual's education qualification from country of origin. A *good choice of course* being studied is another important criterion according to the respondents. The respondents discussed this criterion in terms of 'the course in which the respondent can do best, course related to previous academic qualifications'.

Not to be overlooked is a *good preparation for studying in Austria*. The respondents created the impression that their chances to succeed/progress quickly in studies depended on how informed they were: '(1) about the course they have chosen, (2) about Austrian educational system, and (3) about where they could obtain help in times of need'. There should be a good time planning to meet up with studies' requirements. The respondents emphasized that the aim to finish comes into play if one talks about succeeding in tertiary studies. They maintained that, buying away time in the tertiary institution could only be for a while. Sooner or later, the candidate would become a drop-out.

The same category includes *less work and more of studying*. To work as a student is crucial for the respondents. They said it is in order to pay their bills. But more of working and less studying according to the respondents limits the chances of successful completion of the studies. Some of them gave a *good studying culture* to have helped them in their studies. They said that, one must be disciplined in reading, going to lectures, be punctual and take his exams in order to succeed in studies.

To *master German language* or to study in English or French which a BAMSA is good at is another important criterion they pointed out. Without this factor, they maintained, studying in Austria for the Black Africans may not be successful. The last in this category is the *study period*. Some of the respondents said that, the studying period should fall within the stipulated semesters.

### Category 2: Psychological resources

*Intention to study* before leaving his country of origin plays a big role for the BAMSA interviewed. Only one of them developed the interest to study here in Austria. Furthermore, the BAMSA interviewed *valued education more than other alternatives in Austria*; e.g. working to enrich oneself. They said that, the value the individual placed on education was a determinant of whether one could pay the price necessary to be successful in studies.

Some of the respondents emphasized the need for *locus of control* in order to be successful in his studies. According to them, one needs to believe in himself, that his effort will yield success. This helps them to make all the necessary efforts. There would be so many huddles on the way. They said a BAMSA need to try and try again. BAMSA should be active in seeking information and knowledge relevant for his situation. He should be self-disciplined. Similar to locus of control is *self-efficacy*. This is in the form of high expectations, desires, and the willpower to achieve an academic title; other qualities are: self-confidence, optimism, determination, being focused and goal oriented. All the Respondents claimed that these internal qualities are the key to success in studies.

The respondents said that, unchecked/excessive leisure is a pitfall. It could be in the form of too many girlfriends, parties, or outings. It could be deduced that *less leisure* is one of the criteria that made the BAMS to be successful in their studies. The final criterion in this category is *emotional control*. The respondents maintained that, difficulties and temptations are bound to cross their way. They spoke of control over pride, anger, crime as necessary to ensure successful completion of studies. BAMSA would need to humble himself in order to learn and benefit from other students.

### **Category 3: Institutionalized factors**

Turning to the *social factors*, the first on the list in this category is *affirmative action*. The respondents spoke of it as a conscious policy to help BAMSA; it could be implemented by the government or within the faculty. As examples the respondents said that, they were exempted from paying the school fees in most Austrian public universities. Two of the respondents said they were exempted from the fees as a result of the authentication through Austrian Embassy in their country of origin. Also a *stable resident permit* must be explicitly mentioned in this category. The respondents said that, if BAMSA's residential permit is not secured, a deportation from Austria could follow.

According to them, the psychological stress if one finds himself in this predicament may not allow the BAMSA to perform any academic tasks.

Furthermore the respondents claimed that to be successful in studies, BAMSA need to be *financially stable*. However, only one of them said he was financially stable. Their argument is that a guaranteed source/s of income should be there; at least to pay for the student's bills. Another criterion they mentioned is that there should not be a *glass ceiling effect*. Perceiving that there is no chance of a job or that the chances of staying in Austria are limited could cause the Black African to drop out of studies. According to the respondents, the glass ceiling effect had only a little impact on them. Some claimed not to feel it at all. This helped them to persist in their studies. The sky is their limit. If they do not succeed here in Austria, they could succeed somewhere else.

The respondents advocated for *less segregation*. Some of them said they ignored it completely. According to them, everyday racism, legal hindrances to foreigners in the area of job opportunities, segregation in the team work with other students should be minimized or be removed entirely. The effect of segregation is more severe when it is legalized - such as the existing one in the employment system<sup>31</sup>. Another important criterion for the respondents was a *good teacher-student interaction*. No conflict should exist between the BAMSA and any professor/s.

Distance to school, according to one of the respondents could be a barrier. Hence, a *short distance* was stated by them as helpful. The respondents added that *good facilities/infrastructure* in the form of equipment in the school and a good studying atmosphere contributed to their success in studies. It is therefore seen as one of the criterion worth mentioning in this research.

#### **Category 4: Social capital**

The first criterion in this category is *interacting with native students*. This means going to groups meetings, get-togethers and participating in the team work at school. *Relating with Austrians* is equally a criterion for the BAMSA's. The respondents created the impression that there is a high correlation between success in studies in Austria and

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<sup>31</sup> I wrote of the psychological effect of racism, discrimination and segregations (p. 42). Less of these features make the BAMSA to succeed better. Equally in Black Women Beating the Odds, (literature review, (p. 28), racism and segregation etc. pose a great threat to academic success.

integration, or interaction with either native students or native speakers. They said that through such interaction, they pepped up their German language skills, received encouragement, material help and a new perspective of life.

The respondents claimed that the *less family responsibility* a BAMSA has, the higher his chances to succeed in studies, and the quicker is his progress. Family responsibility is when one has his close relatives (wife, children) to care for here in Austria or back home. Or one cares for relatives or parents here or back home. There should also be a *positive family influence*. The respondents claimed that, if the family members are supportive, it helps. For instance, family members could be role models; some could give also financial and moral support.

Friends served as social buffers and helped to motivate, encourage and inspire. Therefore, *positive peer influence*, according to the respondents is a significant criterion for success in studies. Non-academic friends could be mockers and cause distractions to the BAMSA, they said. There are Blacks that have studied in Austria or Germany who became role models and served as a motivation for the respondents. The fact that those people have studied and became successful made the respondents to believe that they will equally make it.

*Contact with former Black African students/graduates* is necessary if a BAMSA wants to succeed/succeed quicker, according to the respondents. Former Black African students/graduates formed reliable sources of information and advices. The last but not least criterion is *solidarity*. The sense that 'I am an African', the desire to promote the image of Africans in Austria, or to be of help to the African community was a motivation which helped some of the BAMSA to be successful in tertiary studies.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

### Introduction

In this research I wanted to know: What criteria/factors could account for a successful tertiary education of Black Africans who wish to study in Austria? I used the qualitative method for this work. By the reviewing of literature that discussed success or dropping out of students from tertiary studies in Austria and USA, criteria that help students to succeed in tertiary studies were sorted out. Semi-structured questions were formulated for interview with the BAMSA. 12 persons were interviewed. 30 factors/criteria that helped the BAMSA to be successful in studies emerged from the coding. I arranged these criteria in two dimensions – personal factors and social factors. Each dimension has two categories. Figure 2 (page 65) and 3 (page 66) are the category schemas.

In this chapter I will summarize the 30 criteria found in this thesis, maintaining that the findings did not differ greatly from those found in the literature. Out of the 30 criteria, 10 items are extracted. The 10 items are the criteria found to be particular to the BAMSA. These items were not found in the literature. A relational model which took the pattern of Perrier Bourdieu's capital relationship is suspected to exist among the two category dimensions and within each dimension. Hypotheses were generated and recommendations for future researches on this topic were made.

### 7.1 The criteria found in literature reviewed, confirmed by the respondents

The first category of the criteria that helped the respondents is the cultural capital. This category comprises a good academic background which has to do with student's academic upbringing. The literature discussed this criterion as the pre-college grades /performance (Kolland, 2002:37ff; Gold et al., 2005; Gold, 1999; Meinefeld, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:60; 101 respectively). The bottom line was that the respondents said that they made a good choice of the course they studied (Zalaquett, 2005:39). Lawin, (1999) showed how students after some semesters discovered that they have no interest in the topic of the course chosen; they dropped out of studies (cit-

ed in Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:29). A good choice of course they studied makes studying interesting. Interest in study makes students to persist in their studies.

Some of the respondents claimed to have been well informed about the course they took, about Austrian educational system, and where they could obtain help in times of need. This means that a good pre-college preparation was identified to be one of the factors that ensure success in studies (Zalaquett, 2005:39). A good time management is another point mentioned in this category. This is to accommodate family responsibility, work etc. Only one respondent saw being focused and determination to be an antidote for a failed study time plan. However the study duration could be longer; which is also a disadvantage (Lawin, 1999). If the study duration is long, one may become exposed to other circumstances which are beyond his control and this could lead to a dropout. Not having enough time to study was one of the reasons for dropping out of studies (Koch, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:148).

The respondents must also work less and do more of studying. This criterion serves as an antidote to “work” which causes many students to drop out of studies (Kolland, 2002:55; Koch, 1999; Lawin, 1999). In addition to that, some of the respondents claimed to be disciplined in reading, going to lectures, be punctual, and taking the exams – all of which I termed, “good studying culture”. 46% of the respondents in Kolland, (2002) gave “I did little for my studies” as their reason for dropping out (p.55). This criterion is what Tinto called academic integration (Tinto, 1975). Finally, studying period should not be too long. One should do it as quick as possible; preferably within the stipulated number of semesters (Lawin, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:20).

The next category is the student’s psychological resources. They placed great value on education/knowledge and the certificate they will acquire (Harris/Halpin, 2002: 81; Zalaquett, 2005:41). Furthermore the respondents believed that their efforts will be successful; they made the effort; they were active in seeking relevant information for their situation and applied self-discipline. These internal resources, Harris/Halpin, (2002) are called *locus of control*. Students exhibit high expectations and a desire/willpower to achieve an academic title; they are self-confident, optimistic, determined, focused and goal oriented – they show self-efficacy (Harris/Halpin, 2002; Gold, 1999 cited in

Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:60). The BAMSA said that they knew what they wanted and they went for it, never losing focus, believing they will get it.

The category *institutionalized factors* addressed the issues of policies both at the social level and within the faculties – all the institutionalized opportunities. The BAMSA enjoyed the benefits of some affirmative actions (Davis, 2002; O'Connor 2002). They emphasized stable sources of income (Harris/Halpin, 2002) and they maintained the hope that they will get a job if they finish studying; the glass ceiling effect played only a minor role (Harris/Halpin, 2002; Lawin, 1999 cited in Schröder-Gronostay, 1999:20, 29). This category also includes less segregation both in the class room and in the society at large. O'Connor, (2002) stated how racial segregation affected black female students in USA and Davis (2002) presented Afro-Americans and Latina/o Americans at 30 US universities that made efforts to reduce racial differences.

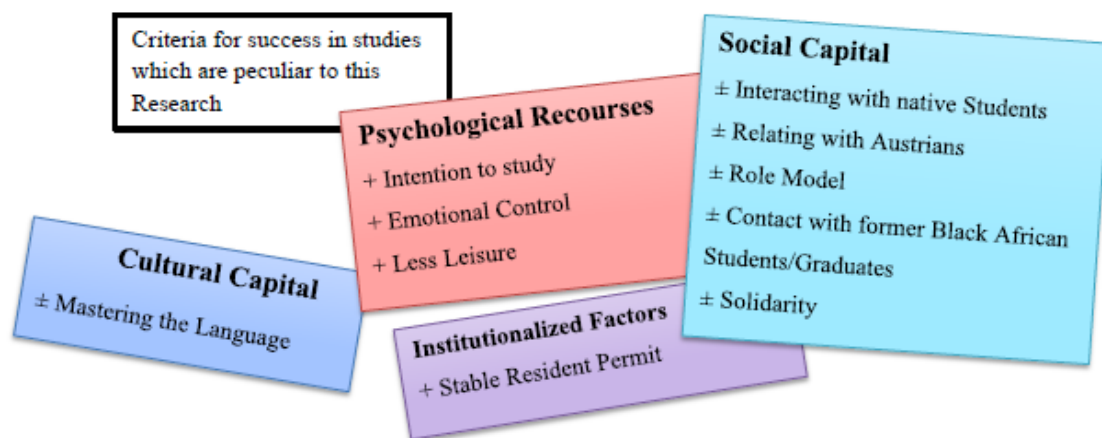
The respondents claimed to have had a *good teacher-student relationship*. This criterion has been found to be one of the factors that ensure student's success in studies (Kolland, 2002:72; Lawin, 1999). Finally, the well-equipped institutions and the system of learning/studying in Austria helped the respondents to finish their studies. Tinto, (1975:113) found that the quality of the institution made the students persist in studies (Lawin, 1999; Wittenberg/Rothe 1999).

Additional claim made by the respondents was that the *social capital* helped them to be successful in their studies. This includes more support from their family and less responsibilities burdening them (Harris/Halpin, 2002). The opposite could lead to dropping out (Kolland, 2002; Terenzini, et al., 1994) The respondents stated *positive peer and family influence* as a part of the criteria for their success in studies (Harris/Halpin, 2002; Zalaquett, 2005).

## 7.2 Criteria particular to the BAMSA

There are 10 of the criteria that are particular only to this research when compared with other criteria found in the literature (see Chap. 2). Figure 4 shows the 10 criteria.

Ch. 6; Figure: 4; Criteria peculiar to the 12 BAMSA



Source: figure prepared by Asuke Patrick

Mastering the German language is a criterion for succeeding in studies according to the respondents. This factor is understandable since the respondents are first generation of Black African students in a German speaking country. Within the category: psychological resources, the student's intention coming to Austria/abroad is a determining factor. The respondents claimed they had studying as a part of their "abroad agenda". They purposely came to Austria to study. This purpose they made their priority. Consequently, they had less leisure e.g. parties, discos and going out. Lastly in this category, the respondents controlled pride, anger and crime; they chose humility instead.



Stable resident permit is particular for the BAMSA. They also emphasized interaction with local students as well as other natives. Another claim was that some successful predecessors - Black Africans who studied in Austria - served as a role model and a motivation to them. Reliable numbers on such *role models* are scarce in Austria. It is suspected that this could account for the few Black African graduates in Austria. However, the respondents maintained that some Black Africans who studied here in Austria or in Germany were partly a motivation for them. They also said that contacts with former Black African students - for information exchange - helped them to succeed in their studies. Lastly, the desire to be good ambassadors of Africa or the wish to provide help for Africa etc. made them to work harder and become successful in their studies.

I would say that the 20 criteria discussed were found in the literature. They were directly or indirectly mentioned by all respondents. That is to say, the criteria were described in a similar sense; though they may be described in different terms and different examples. For instance, the discussion about segregation/marginalization which exceeded from the class rooms to employment system: in the US literature on this topic, segregation was discussed as it appears within the schools. Furthermore it was described in a positive sense; as there were efforts to create a non-racial atmosphere in the schools.

Worth of mentioning is the criterion *affirmative action*. Whereby it was discussed in the USA literature as an active criterion to promote minority students; the BAMSA responses gave the picture of rather passive consideration. For example in the USA, affirmative action for some schools included reduction of or an exemption from school fees as well as special study programmes for people of colour, flexible admission standards, scholarship, institutional college counselling by personnel from the same racial group, good racial and political climate, consultations with the same racial group, creating a good information system by personnel from such group, integration and awareness programmes for minority groups (Davis, 2002).

The respondents reported of numerous institutional barriers. Hence they advocated that Black Africans should enjoy certain favourable admission policies, reduction of or no school fees, and general administrative protocols. According to the respondents, the current deliberations in university policy in Austria such as introduction of entrance exams, introduction of school fees etc. could be adding salt to injury for African stu-

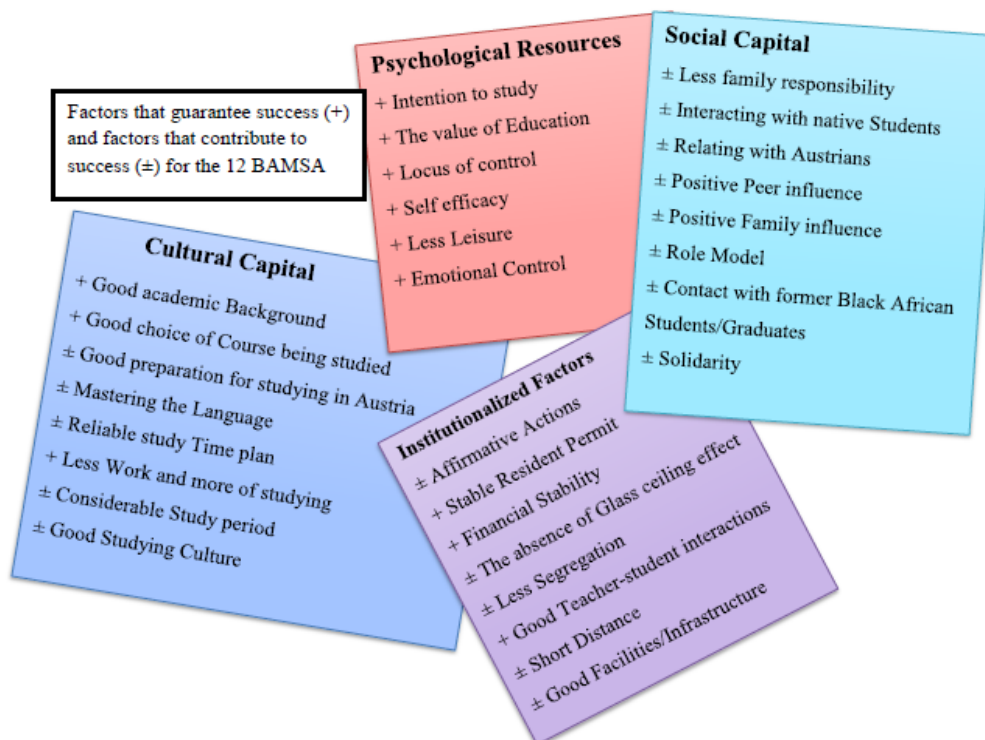
dents in Austria; unless they are further exempted or even be given more favorable opportunities for studying in Austria.

Finally it could be observed that the respondents require a wider range of social capital than was found in the literature. Mentioned in the literature were family, peer groups and social integration within the faculty. For the BAMSA, social interaction included local students as well as other Austrians. This increased their language skills, their chances of getting financial help and academic support.

## 7.2 Relationship between the criteria

A detailed view of the enumerated criteria suggests that there are crucial factors and factors that were supportive for the success. The crucial factors could be termed “criteria that guarantee success” and the other “criteria that contribute to success” in studies. Figure 5 is a schema of the factors marked with “+/ $\pm$ ” signs.

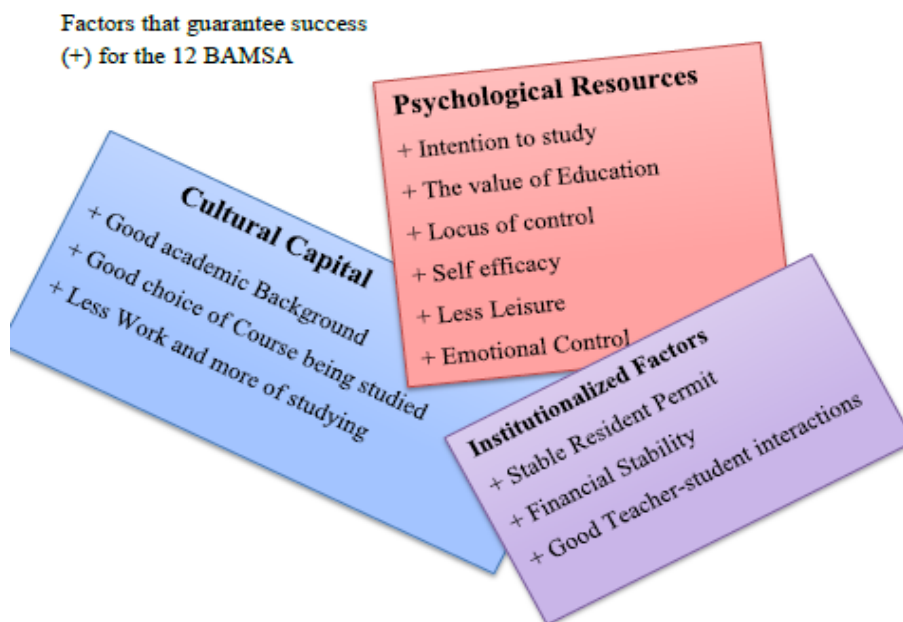
Ch. 7; Figure 5: Factors that guarantee success and factors that contribute to success



Source: figure prepared by Asuke Patrick

The factors that guarantee success are marked with + sign indicating that their presence made the BAMSA interviewed to be successful/to progress quicker in their studies. The factors that contribute to success are marked with  $\pm$  sign to indicate that with or without them, the BAMSA would have succeeded in their studies anyway. If they are not present, even with only the + factors, the BAMSA would have still succeeded in their studies. In a narrow sense, figure 6 shows the criteria the BAMSA needed to succeed in their tertiary education.

Ch. 7; Figure 6: Criteria that guarantee completion of tertiary education



Source: figure prepared by Asuke Patrick

I came to this conclusion as I compared the responses of the respondents: resident status, academic background, family responsibilities etc. They gave the impression that these “+” criteria must be there; otherwise the students could not have succeeded in their studies. I examined their answers to my question “Please tell me three most important things a Black African student needs in order to be successful while studying in Austria”. The positive criteria were the most frequently mentioned criteria. Furthermore in the course of the interviews, they laid emphasis on those criteria. About 60% of them were successful with few or none of the “ $\pm$ ” criteria.

In other words, from the cultural capital comprising a good academic background, good choice of course to study and less work but more of studying, together with all the psychological resources, the BAMSA needed just a stable resident permit, financial stability and good student-teacher relationship from the social factors in order to be successful. Any additional “±” factors from the three categories (cultural capital, institutionalized factors and social capital) would have made the 12 respondents to succeed better/progress faster or both. If all “±” factors are absent, the BAMSA would have succeeded in their studies anyway. The studies could have taken longer time, require more energy and be of poor success but the BAMSA still would be able to complete their studies. I suggest a quantitative and a more representative research to confirm this observation and to see if it could be generalized among Black African students.

The following responses suggest that some criteria were already in place before most of the BAMSA started their studies.

You see, before I came here I had to ask the people who are studying here. So they told me the prospects, something like this free studying. So I know that my only problem was to take care of myself. So it is always good for one to be well informed about studying in a place before he comes (BAMSA-8).

So I asked myself: what do I really want? I made up my mind to study what I think that I can do best. It was just my personal interest. I will tell my African brothers to forget about money and go home and think what you can do best and study that. Not every Black African can study. Even not every Black African that wants to study can study. All fingers are not equal. To be able to go through the Austrians and their academic system, their language; to read, to hear them and to speak with academics, to scale through are not easy. You are competing with the whites. First of all if you don't have financial help, you cannot study. I already said that. Without that - no way. Another thing is determination. You will be what you want to be. Make sure that you are not distracted by legal status. Make sure that this is in order. So that you can focus on other things (BAMSA-1).

My Advice is that if you are here and you want to study, you have to remain focused. Secondly you have to learn the language because you don't have any other alternative. Thirdly you must learn how to sit down and study. Fourthly if you get in you try to integrate yourself with other students so that you know what is happening. Some people don't go to the lectures ... (BAMSA-12).

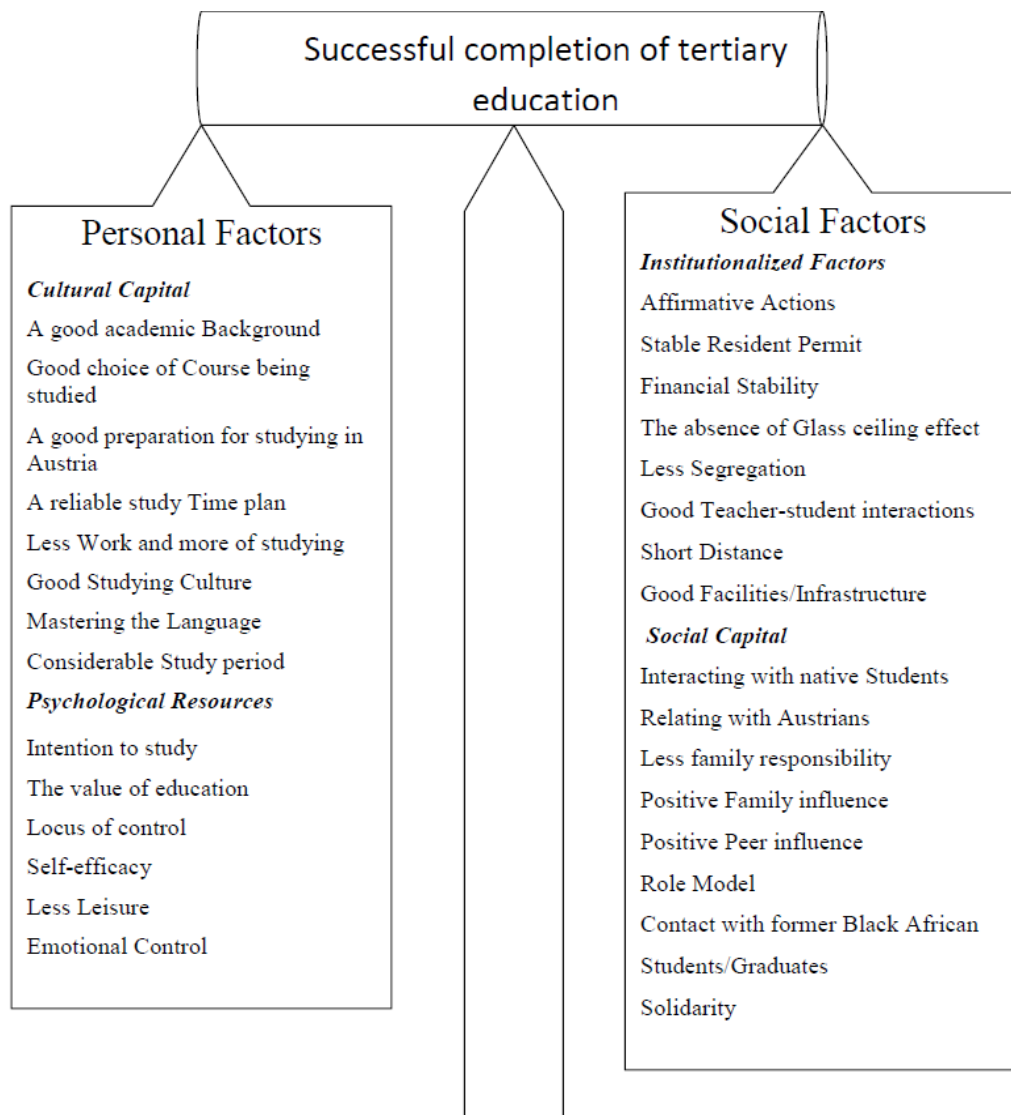
The issue of visa, although it belong to the category of money must be taken care of (BAMSA-9).

Make sure you have sufficient funds before you even start, because nobody will be able to help you financially here (BAMSA-10).

All these suggested that the respondents considered these issues to be of great importance before they even started studying in Austria.

A second relational model could be constructed. It suggests that personal factors could complement social factors. If equilibrium is attained, the respondents would succeed in their studies. Figure 7 represents this model.

Ch. 7; Figure 7: Relational Model 2



Source: figure prepared by Asuke Patrick

In this model, a decrease in strength of personal factors requires an equal proportional increase in strength of social factors in order to ensure a successful completion of tertiary education for the BAMSA. I came to this conclusion when I observed that none of the respondents possessed all of the necessary criteria. Actually none of them possessed all the “+” factors as discussed above. It could be observed that they succeeded for the fact that when one factor was not or only partly present, another factor could compensate or partly compensate for it. Of course in the case, that such factor is replaceable.

For example, some of the BAMSA have had no valid resident permit, due to one reason or other. The immigration office may be ordering them to leave the country. Usually, the expulsion negotiations last three to four years. Sometimes, the case might be decided in his favour. Two of the respondents who found themselves in such situation also found another means of legalizing their stay. But within this process, they applied self-efficacy and locus of control in an increased measure in order to continue their studies.

Another extreme example is when a Black African has little or no intention to study, the presence of other Black African graduates could push him to persist and complete the studies. In the course of this thesis, I interviewed (informally and off record) a Black African who spent seven and half years here in Austria without education before re-migrating to London. He told me why he left for London. He saw no future with working in the kitchen, coupled with language problem. He said:

As I went to London, I got a security job. I was challenged by some Blacks over there who are in high positions in the company that I work. Some of them I knew back home in Lagos. I was even better than them in those days, academically and otherwise. But each morning, I will be opening gate for them as they drove in with their suit. My brother, no one told me to go and enroll in the evening school. If you go to bank, you will see Blacks as managers and big officers. If you go to meeting, everyone will be speaking grammar based on their profession. I became challenged. Today I have three degrees in three different fields. The problem in Austria is that we come here to meet people who are limited by Austrian system. If those

who came before you do not go higher, your chances of moving higher is equally limited<sup>32</sup>.

In his story, conducive role models moved him to study even despite his having no initial intention to study in London. Another example is that a good teacher-student relationship could complement low emotional control in a way that the BAMSA could succeed in studies. An example from respondent No. four reads:

To his emotion he said:

At the beginning of my career I was too proud and some get scared from me because I challenged them. Do not be too emotional, this is one of our mistakes we do often. We just slam the door.

To his relationship with the professors and students he said:

The professors were nice. With students we had very nice relationship. We had parties but then there were racists.

What would have been the result if the professors and some students were not “nice”? Finally, one could deduce from the responses that, an ingrained perception of the importance and function of good education by the respondents combated any form of segregation, long distance or other difficulties. In the end the BAMSA succeeded in their studies. This pattern follows Bourdieu’s capital relationship, whereby one form of capital could be traded off for the other. Cultural capital could be converted to economic capital and social capital could serve the purpose of economic capital (Giddens, 2009:846ff).

## **Suggested future researches**

To a satisfactory extent the research question in this thesis was answered. The research wanted to know: what criteria/factors could account for a successful tertiary education of Black-Africans who wish to study in Austria. 30 items were listed by the respondents in which 20 of them were directly or indirectly found in the literature on this topic. The rest 10 items were particular to the BAMSA which could be explained by the social exclusion paradigms discussed in chapter 3.

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<sup>32</sup> Response from a Nigerian who spent 7, 5 years in Austria before going to London

One of the reasons for choosing qualitative research method for this work is that no study known to me looked into the academic situation of Black Africans in Austria. Even in the few existing Austrian researches, emphasis was placed on the causes of dropping out of university studies. This study therefore serves as an explorative study to ascertain the subjective experiences of Blacks who studied in Austria. It also examined the criteria for success in studies and possible dimensions of this topic. A quantitative survey to validate the dimensions is necessary.

The respondents were only but male students/graduates. There could be further qualitative studies to see what experienced their female counterparts had. In similar manner, the research did not take into deeper consideration the efforts the BAMSA put in the studies – hours spent learning, working etc. The income or financial conditions of the persons or the differences in schools/faculties were not considered. All these may require a further qualitative research to obtain more detailed information.

Therefore a handful of future researches could be suggested:

1. Literature review to synthesize/extract all available/relevant dimensions of factors that could cause a student in Austria to be successful.
2. A representative (quantitative) multi-variant analysis to confirm the relevance and validity of each item, factors and dimensions.
3. Comparative researches on this topic which could be:
  - a. Between first generation BAMSA and second or third generation of BAMSA.
  - b. Between Black Africans and other immigrant students in Austria.
  - c. Between BAMSA and local students.
  - d. If there are any significant gender differences.
  - e. Between the successful and the dropout BAMSA.

Notwithstanding, significant items came out which could be tested by a quantitative and a more representative survey. It could as well be limited to Black male students in Austria. Dropouts could be brought in to compare and justify the outcomes. For example, I noticed that the 12 respondents passed through all sought of difficulties; yet, they were successful. I then asked myself, what could have the dropouts experienced that



made them to drop out? I then proposed that: ‘Among the Black Africans who attempted studying in any of tertiary institutions in Austria, there would be no significant difference between the objectified negative experiences of the free-will drop-outs and the objectified negative experiences of the successful ones’.

To confirm my suspected complementary nature of the criteria (see relational model 2); I propose that ‘A BAMSA who has more of personal factors may require less of the social factors in order to be successful in studies and those who have less of personal factors could equally succeed with increased social factors’.

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## Declaration

I, Patrick Asuke, declare herewith, that the complete thesis was written by me. The used literatures and sources of information are correctly cited. I am aware of the consequences that follow in case of a misuse of sources.

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Vienna, 10.01.2012

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## Attachments

### Curriculum Vitae

Patrick Asuke; 02.02.1985, Enugu State; Nigeria

E-mail address: asukep@yahoo.co.uk

Confession: Christian; preacher; Bible teacher

### Education Qualifications

1990-1995	First School Leaving Certificate. Community Primary School Mbu-Amon. Enugu State; Nigeria
1995-1997	Senior Secondary Certificate Examination. Extra-moral Studies: Special Science Academy. Enugu State; Nigeria
1995-1999	National Technical Certificate Examination. Extra-moral Studies: Special Science Academy. Enugu State; Nigeria
2005-2012	Magister (RESOWI): University of Vienna

### Working Experience

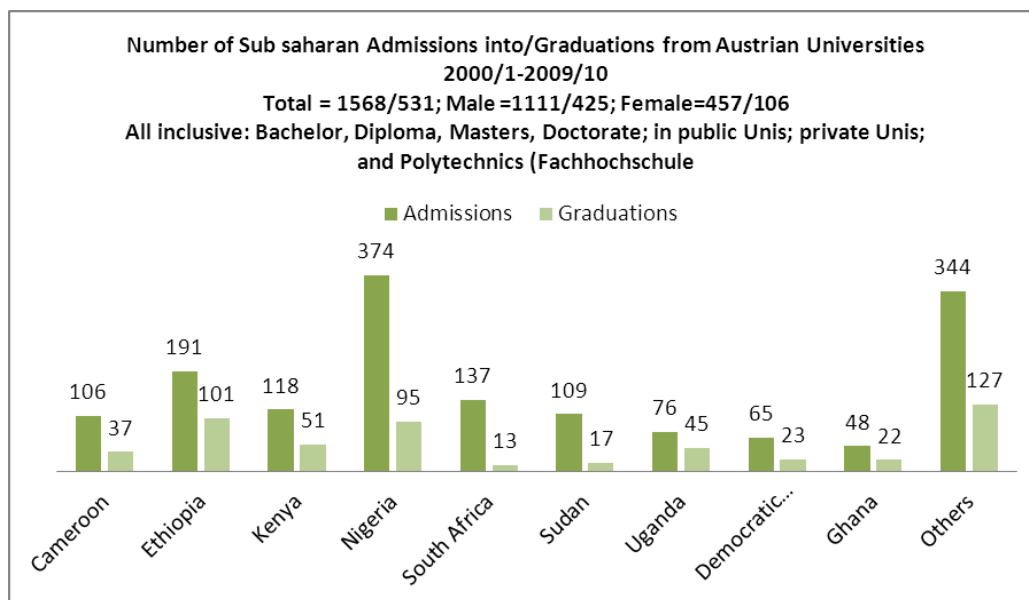
2004----	Self-employed: Transporter
2004 - 2008	Theatric artist
2006– ---	Self-employed: Documentation, Video Editor
2010	Junior School private teacher: English and Mathematics

### Publications

2010	Book: Evangelizing the child: How to lead a child to Christ.
2010 ...	Editor: Search the Scripture's monthly Journals and Magazines

## Additional Figures and Tables

### Attachment 1: Sub Saharan Admissions into/Graduations of Austrian Universities



Source: uni.data; prepared by Patrick Asuke.

### Attachment 2: Sub Saharan Students in Austria

Sub Saharan Students in Austria				
	Public University	Polytechnics (Fachhochschule)	Private University	Total
2000/01	682			682
2002/03	440	3		443
2003/04	357	6		363
2004/05	412	10		422
2005/06	352	13		365
2006/07	371	19	11	401
2007/08	401	38	12	451
2008/09	409	51	21	481
2009/10	423	77	35	535

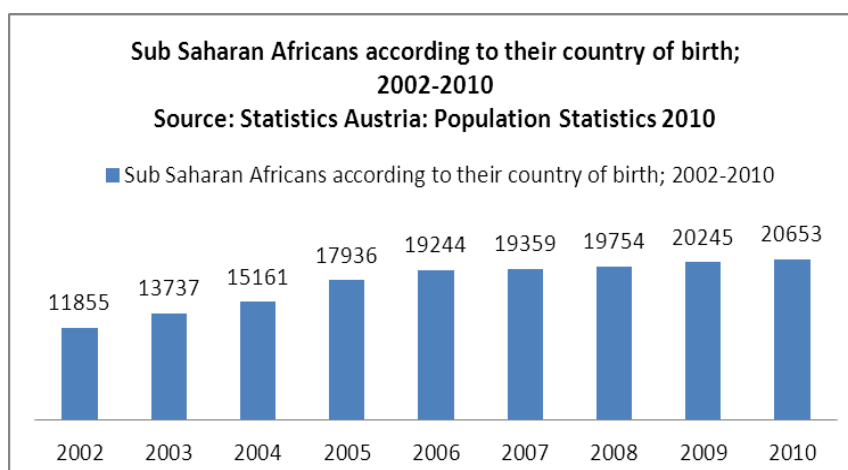
Source: uni.data; prepared by Patrick Asuke.

## Attachment 3: Reasons for Dropping out of University

S/N	Reasons for Dropping out of University	Strongly agree/Agree	Average	Variance
1	Studying could not be reconciled with my work.	55%	2,43	1,83
2	I did not work harder in my studies.	46%	2,75	1,41
3	I feel continually estranged from the university.	46%	2,76	1,52
4	The study was too theoretical for me.	45%	2,73	1,73
5	I found an attractive job.	43%	2,76	1,76
6	I started (wanted to start) another course.	38%	2,90	1,85
7	I became annoyed about the studying rules.	37%	2,93	1,42
8	I did not have a clear structure of the studies	35%	3,00	1,41
9	I stopped because I must work to earn money	33%	3,00	1,46
10	I stopped because I wanted to be independent from my parents.	28%	3,20	1,29
11	The attention given to me by the school personnel was not enough.	27%	3,24	1,33
12	Less chances of employment for the course I am studying.	26%	3,24	1,25
13	The study was for me more of schooling	18%	3,42	0,94
14	The expectations was too high for me	17%	3,45	0,80
15	I want to take care of my child/family	16%	3,56	1,01
16	I did not pass the exams	11%	3,67	0,63

Source: Kolland, (2002); prepared by Patrick Asuke.

## Attachment 4: Population of Sub Saharan Africans according to their country of birth



Source: Statistic Austria; prepared by Patrick Asuke.

## Attachment 5: Pre-test Questions

Institute for Social ScienceDepartment of SociologyViennaDiplom-Thesis@ Asuke Patrick16.02.2011Questionnaire for Semi-Structured InterviewsSummary of the Concept for my thesis

The topic of my thesis will be: The Road to an Academic Title; the challenges and the criteria for success - A research about first generation Black-Africans who studied or are studying in Austria. I intend to pen-down all what a Black-African student has to go through in Austria before he or she graduates. Emphasis will be placed on the factors that lead to a successful completion of graduate studies in Austria.

**My motivations and aims:** Only but a few (531) Sub-Saharan Graduations (Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate etc.) took place in Austria in the past 10 years. Out of the few numbers that enrolled in the universities, most of the students do not complete their studies. There has not been any research known to me, which engaged itself with the situation of Black-African students in Austria as a whole. I wish to dig out **the main challenges which restrain** Black-Africans from tertiary education in Austria and **the criteria that helped** those who succeeded in their studies; with hope of making recommendation for future academic policies in Austria and giving tips to potential Black-African students.

In this work "Academic Title" begins with first degree. It will concentrate on those who obtained any degree, i.e. Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate etc. The participants are those Black Africans who were not born in Austria. The challenges, I mean the difficulties in gaining admission, financial situation, language barrier, coping with Studying and daily life, distractions i.e. to look for work, pressure from studying and residence policies etc. The victory in the other hand is the general criteria for success; individual qualities, i.e. motivations, supports, determination, strategies employed. Student may be seen as successful in tertiary education when (1) they have obtained their first degree; (2) when they are at least in their point of writing their Thesis for the first degree.

Procedure: After an open ended interview, a few structured questions will be given.

Lastly, any pieces of information will strictly be for academic purposes. That means the principle of anonymity will be respected.

### Pre-test Questionnaire for Qualitative Interviews

1. Please, tell me about your academic life story.
2. What obstacles or challenges (if any) you had to overcome in order to attend the university in Austria?
3. Did you use any special skill, method or strategy that helped you in your studies?
4. What motivated you to pursue a university education?
5. Are there persons, groups, organizations that played key roles in your studies?
6. What would you suggest to other potential black-African students that are contemplating to have a university education in Austria?

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## Attachment 6: Interview Questions

### Questionnaire for Qualitative Interviews

1. Please, tell me about your academic life story.
2. What obstacles or challenges (if any) you had to overcome in order to attend the university in Austria?
3. Did you use any special skill, method or strategy that helped you in your studies?
4. What motivated you to pursue a university education?
5. Are there persons, groups, organizations that were instrumental to success in your study? What roles did they play?
6. What would you suggest to other potential Black-African students that are contemplating a university education in Austria?
7. Please tell me three most common barriers to studying in Austria.
8. Tell me three important things one need to be successful when studying in Austria.

**Detailed Questions****Structured Interview Questionnaire**

- 1) Did you do any other thing before your study?
  - a. I Worked
  - b. I did some courses (.....)
  - c. I did nothing
  - d. I secured my residential permit first (by .....
- 2) Why did you chose the course you studied
  - a. Personal interest
  - b. Advised by friends/family/relation
  - c. Other reasons .....
- 3) When you look back, do you have the feelings you would have studied something else?
  - a. Yes .....
  - b. No
- 4) How satisfied are you with what you studied
  - a. Very satisfied
  - b. Somehow satisfied
  - c. Satisfied
  - d. Not quite satisfied
  - e. Very unsatisfied
- 5) What did you do/intend to do after your study?
  - a. Working
  - b. Further studies
  - c. Special courses
  - d. Others .....

- 
- 6) Overall assessment: I have the feeling that my studying in Austria was/is
- a) Very helpful to me
  - b) Helpful to me
  - c) Not quite helpful to me
  - d) Not helpful to me
  - e) For example .....

Questionnaire for Qualitative Interviews

1. Please, tell me about your academic life story.
  - a. What is your education qualification before you came to Austria?
  - b. How many years did you spend in Austria before you started your study?
  - c. To be a graduate, was that your life dream?
  - d. Was to study in abroad, your wish from outset of your migration plan?
2. What obstacles or challenges (if any) you had to overcome in order to attend the university in Austria?
  - a. Were there any problems by admission, resident permit, rents, feeding and other essential things of daily living?
  - b. Did you work during your study period? Full time, part time?
  - c. Must you care for any of your relations/family here or back home during your study period?



- 
- d. Was/were there any of your friends/colleagues who dropped out of their studies because of the kinds of problems you told me?
      - e. What kinds of distractions did you have to face during your studies?
  3. Did you use any special skill, method or strategy that helped you in your studies? What are they?
    - a. Did you have a glimpse of the full work load at the beginning of your studies?
    - b. Did you envisage anything that could form hindrance at the outset of your study?
    - c. Did you put up a time plan for yourself; were you able to follow then?
  4. What motivated you to pursue a university education?
    - a. Were there other alternatives to studying in Austria which you rejected?
    - b. Did you perceive any chances of finding a job if you finish your study? Does this have any influence on the course you chose?
    - c. What were your expectations before and during your studies?
    - d. Did you at any time feel rejected by this society? If yes, how did you react to it?
    - e. Did you receive any financial help?
  5. Are there persons, groups, organizations that were instrumental to success in your study? What roles did they play?

- 
- a. Was/were there close friends or relation in Austria before you?
    - b. Were there mockers or those who would have lead you to failure?  
What effect did their mockery/attempt have on your study?
    - c. How was the relationship between you and others students and your professors?
    - d. How many other students (forerunners and successors) were you in close contact with till you finish your study?
  6. What would you suggest to other potential Black-African students that are contemplating a university education in Austria?
    - a. Were your expectations before and during your studies fulfilled?
    - b. Have you recommended studying to any Black-African; what course did you recommend?
    - c. Are you aware of any Black-African who took your steps, advice or were influenced by your success to complete his or her study?
    - d. Were there mistakes you made which you may advice potential students to avoid?
  7. Please tell me three most common barriers to studying in Austria.
  8. Tell me three important things one need to be successful when studying in Austria.
  9. Is there any other thing which you think relevant to this topic which I did not ask?

Attachment 7: Demography Table

S/N	Age	When you came to Austria	Ed. Qualification from Home country	Types of Degree acquired	Residential Status: at Beginning of and at the End studies		Education status of Parents		Language used		Semesters Studied	Number Children	Marital Status	
					Begin	End	Father	Mother	German	English			Married	Not Married
Respondents that studied/ are studying human Sciences														
BAMSA-1	32	1990	Secondary Certificat/Advanced GCE	Magister	Stateless	Stateless	Teachers Training College	Teachers Training College	German		7 1/2	2	Married	
BAMSA-2	36	2004	BSC	Masters	Refugee	Visa	Not	Not	German	English	6	2	Married	
BAMSA-3	27	2004	Secondary Certificat	Masters	Student Visa	Student Visa	Secondary School	Secondary School	German		10	0		Not Married
BAMSA-4	30	1979	First degree	Masters/D octorate	Student Visa	Student Visa	Primary Education	Primary Education	German		Masters 2 Doctorate 4	0		Not Married
BAMSA-5	25	2003	Secondary Certificat	Masters	Refugee	Refugee	Teacher	House Wife	German		8	0		Not Married
BAMSA-6	27	1999	Secondary Certificat	Master of Art	Student Visa	Citizen	Graduate	Graduate	German		4	0		Not Married
BAMSA-7	30	2001	Transferred Student	Masters	Student Visa	Student Visa	Not	Not	German		8	2	Married	

S/N	Age	When you come to Austria	Ed. Qualification from Home country	Types of Degree acquired	Residential Status: at Beginning of and at the End studies		Education status of Parents		Language used		Semesters Studied	Number Children	Marital Status	
					Begin	End	Father	Mother	German	English			Married	Not Married
Respondents that studied/ are studying natural Sciences														
BAMSA-8	32	1977	Transferred Student	Dr. Medicine	Student Visa	Permanent Residence	Not Educated	Not Educated	German		20	2	Married	
BAMSA-9	32	2002	BSC	Magister	Student Visa	Student Visa	Graduate: BSC Eng.	Graduate: BSC	German	English	9	0		Not Married
BAMSA-10	27	2003	BSC	Masters	Student Visa	Permanent Residence	Graduate	Primary School		English	4	3	Married	
BAMSA-11	26	1998	Secondary Certificat	Two Master's degree and doing PhD	Student Visa	Permanent Residence	Policeman	BSC Teaching	German		12	2		Not Married
BAMSA-12	25	1977	Secondary Certificat	Masters	Student Visa	Permanent Residence	Primary Education and a Teacher	House Wife	German		16	0		Not Married